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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

In Three Books.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE GOLDEN THREAD.

CHAPTER VII. MONSIEUR THE MARQUIS IN TOWN.

MONSEIGNEUR, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in his inner room, his sanctuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four a-blaze with gorgeous decoration, and the Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his pocket, emulative of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to conduct the happy chocolate to Monseigneur's lips. One lacquey carried the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function; a third, presented the favoured napkin; a fourth (he of the two gold watches) poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men; he must have died of two.

Monseigneur had been out at a little supper last night, where the Comedy and the Grand Opera were charmingly represented. Monseigneur was out at a little supper most nights, with fascinating company. So polite and so impressive was Monseigneur, that the Comedy and the Grand Opera had far more influence with him in the tiresome articles of state affairs and state secrets, than the needs of all France. A happy circumstance for France, as the like always is for all countries similarly favoured!—always was for England (by way of example), in the regretted days of the merry Stuart who sold it.

Monseigneur had one truly noble idea of general public business, which was, to let everything go on in its own way; of particular public business, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea that it must all go his way—tend to his own power and pocket. Of his pleasures, general and particular, Monseigneur had the other truly noble idea, that the world was made for them. The text of his order (altered from the original by only a pronoun, which is not much) ran: "The earth and the fulness thereof are mine, saith Monseigneur."

Yet, Monseigneur had slowly found that vulgar embarrassments crept into his affairs, both private and public; and he had, as to both classes of affairs, allied himself per force with a Farmer-General. As to finances public, because Monseigneur could not make anything at all of them, and must consequently let them out to somebody who could; as to finances private, because Farmer-Generals were rich, and Monseigneur, after generations of great luxury and expense, was growing poor. Hence, Monseigneur had taken his sister from a convent, while there was yet time to ward off the impending veil, the cheapest garment she could wear, and had bestowed her as a prize upon a very rich Farmer-General, poor in family. Which Farmer-General, carrying an appropriate cane with a golden apple on the top of it, was now among the company in the outer rooms, much prostrated before by mankind—always excepting superior mankind of the blood of Monseigneur, who, his own wife included, looked down upon him with the loftiest contempt.

A sumptuous man was the Farmer-General. Thirty horses stood in his stables, twenty-four male domestics sat in his halls, six body-women waited on his wife. As one who pretended to do nothing but plunder and forage where he could, the Farmer-General—howsoever his matrimonial relations conducted to social morality—was at least the greatest reality among the personages who attended at the hotel of Monseigneur that day.

For, the rooms, though a beautiful scene to look at, and adorned with every device of decoration that the taste and skill of the time could achieve, were, in truth, not a sound business; considered with any reference to the scarecrows in the rags and nightcaps elsewhere (and not so far off, either, but that the watching towers of Notre-Dame, almost equidistant from the two

extremes, could see them both), they would have been an exceedingly uncomfortable business—if that could have been anybody's business, at the house of Monseigneur. Military officers destitute of military knowledge; naval officers with no idea of a ship; civil officers without a notion of affairs; brazen ecclesiastics, of the worst world worldly, with sensual eyes, loose tongues, and looser lives; all totally unfit for their several callings, all lying horribly in pretending to belong to them, but all nearly or remotely of the order of Monseigneur, and therefore foisted on all public employments from which anything was to be got; these were to be told off by the score and the score. People not immediately connected with Monseigneur or the State, yet equally unconnected with anything that was real, or with lives passed in travelling by any straight road to any true earthly end, were no less abundant. Doctors who made great fortunes out of dainty remedies for imaginary disorders that never existed, smiled upon their courtly patients in the ante-chambers of Monseigneur. Projectors who had discovered every kind of remedy for the little evils with which the State was touched, except the remedy of setting to work in earnest to root out a single sin, poured their distracting babble into any ears they could lay hold of, at the reception of Monseigneur. Unbelieving Philosophers who were remodelling the world with words, and making card-towers of Babel to scale the skies with, talked with Unbelieving Chemists who had an eye on the transmutation of metals, at this wonderful gathering accumulated by Monseigneur. Exquisite gentlemen of the finest breeding, which was at that remarkable time—and has been since—to be known by its fruits of indifference to every natural subject of human interest, were in the most exemplary state of exhaustion, at the hotel of Monseigneur. Such homes had these various notabilities left behind them in the fine world of Paris, that the Spies among the assembled devotees of Monseigneur—forming a goodly half of the polite company—would have found it hard to discover among the angels of that sphere, one solitary wife, who, in her manners and appearance, owned to being a Mother. Indeed, except for the mere act of bringing a troublesome creature into this world—which does not go far towards the realisation of the name of mother—there was no such thing known to the fashion. Peasant women kept the unfashionable babies close, and brought them up; and charming grandmammas of sixty dressed and supped as at twenty.

The leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance upon Monseigneur. In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting them right, half of the half-dozen had become members of a fantastic sect of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the spot—thereby setting

up a highly intelligible finger-post to the Future, for Monseigneur's guidance. Beside these Derivishes, were other three who had rushed into another sect, which mended matters with a jargon about "the Centre of truth:" holding that Man had got out of the Centre of truth—which did not need much demonstration—but had not got out of the Circumference, and that he was to be kept from flying out of the Circumference, and was even to be shoved back into the Centre, by fasting and seeing of spirits. Among these, accordingly, much discoursing with spirits went on—and it did a world of good which never became manifest.

But, the comfort was, that all the company at the grand hotel of Monseigneur were perfectly dressed. If the Day of Judgment had only been ascertained to be a dress day, everybody there would have been eternally correct. Such frizzling and powdering and sticking up of hair, such delicate complexions artificially preserved and mended, such gallant swords to look at, and such delicate honour to the sense of smell, would surely keep anything going, for ever and ever. The exquisite gentlemen of the finest breeding wore little pendent trinkets that clinked as they languidly moved; these golden fetters rang like precious little bells; and what with that ringing, and with the rustle of silk and brocade and fine linen, there was a flutter in the air that fanned Saint Antoine and his devouring hunger far away.

Dress was the one unfailing talisman and charm used for keeping all things in their places. Everybody was dressed for a Fancy Ball that was never to leave off. From the Palace of the Tuileries, through Monseigneur and the whole Court, through the Chambers, the Tribunals of Justice, and all society (except the scarecrows), the Fancy Ball descended to the Commune Executioner: who, in pursuance of the charm, was required to officiate "frizzled, powdered, in a gold-laced coat, pumps, and white silk stockings." At the gallows and the wheel—the axe was a rarity—Monsieur Paris, as it was the episcopal mode among his brother Professors of the provinces, Monsieur Orleans, and the rest, to call him, presided in this dainty dress. And who among the company at Monseigneur's reception in that seventeen hundred and eightieth year of our Lord, could possibly doubt, that a system rooted in a frizzled hangman, powdered, gold-laced, pumped, and white-silk stockinged, would see the very stars out!

Monseigneur having eased his four men of their burdens and taken his chocolate, caused the doors of the Holiest of Holiests to be thrown open, and issued forth. Then, what submission, what cringing and fawning, what servility, what abject humiliation! As to bowing down in body and spirit, nothing in that way was left for Heaven—which may have been one among other reasons why the worshippers of Monseigneur never troubled it.

Bestowing a word of promise here and a smile there, a whisper on one happy slave and a wave

of the hand on another, Monseigneur affably passed through his rooms to the remote region of the Circumference of Truth. There, Monseigneur turned, and came back again, and so in due course of time got himself shut up in his sanctuary by the chocolate sprites, and was seen no more.

The show being over, the flutter in the air became quite a little storm, and the precious little bells went ringing down stairs. There was soon but one person left of all the crowd, and he, with his hat under his arm and his snuff-box in his hand, slowly passed among the mirrors on his way out.

"I devote you," said this person, stopping at the last door on his way, and turning in the direction of the sanctuary, "to the Devil!"

With that, he shook the snuff from his fingers as if he had shaken the dust from his feet, and quietly walked down stairs.

He was a man of about sixty, handsomely dressed, haughty in manner, and with a face like a fine mask. A face of a transparent paleness; every feature in it clearly defined; one set expression on it. The nose, beautifully formed otherwise, was very slightly pinched at the top of each nostril. In those two compressions, or dints, the only little change that the face ever showed, resided. They persisted in changing colour sometimes, and they would be occasionally dilated and contracted by something like a faint pulsation; then, they gave a look of treachery, and cruelty, to the whole countenance. Examined with attention, its capacity of helping such a look was to be found in the line of the mouth, and the lines of the orbits of the eyes, being much too horizontal and thin; still, in the effect the face made, it was a handsome face, and a remarkable one.

Its owner went down stairs into the courtyard, got into his carriage, and drove away. Not many people had talked with him at the reception; he had stood in a little space apart, and Monseigneur might have been warmer in his manner. It appeared, under the circumstances, rather agreeable to him to see the common people dispersed before his horses, and often barely escaping from being run down. His man drove as if he were charging an enemy, and the furious recklessness of the man brought no check into the face, or to the lips, of the master. The complaint had sometimes made itself audible, even in that deaf city and dumb age, that, in the narrow streets without footways, the fierce patrician custom of hard driving endangered and maimed the mere vulgar in a barbarous manner. But, few cared enough for that to think of it a second time, and, in this matter, as in all others, the common wretches were left to get out of their difficulties as they could.

With a wild rattle and clatter, and an inhuman abandonment of consideration not easy to be understood in these days, the carriage dashed through streets and swept round corners,

with women screaming before it, and men clutching each other and clutching children out of its way. At last, swooping at a street corner by a fountain, one of its wheels came to a sickening little jolt, and there was a loud cry from a number of voices, and the horses reared and plunged.

But for the latter inconvenience, the carriage probably would not have stopped; carriages were often known to drive on, and leave their wounded behind, and why not? But, the frightened valet had got down in a hurry, and there were twenty hands at the horses' bridles.

"What has gone wrong?" said Monsieur, calmly looking out.

A tall man in a nightcap had caught up a bundle from among the feet of the horses, and had laid it on the basement of the fountain, and was down in the mud and wet, howling over it like a wild animal.

"Pardon, Monsieur the Marquis!" said a ragged and submissive man, "it is a child."

"Why does he make that abominable noise? Is it his child?"

"Excuse me, Monsieur the Marquis—it is a pity—yes."

The fountain was a little removed; for the street opened, where it was, into a space some ten or twelve yards square. As the tall man suddenly got up from the ground, and came running at the carriage, Monsieur the Marquis clapped his hand for an instant on his sword-hilt.

"Killed!" shrieked the man, in wild desperation, extending both arms at their length above his head, and staring at him.

"Dead!"

The people closed round, and looked at Monsieur the Marquis. There was nothing revealed by the many eyes that looked at him but watchfulness and eagerness; there was no visible menacing or anger. Neither did the people say anything; after the first cry, they had been silent, and they remained so. The voice of the submissive man who had spoken, was flat and tame in its extreme submission. Monsieur the Marquis ran his eyes over them all, as if they had been mere rats come out of their holes.

He took out his purse.

"It is extraordinary to me," said he, "that you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children. One or the other of you is for ever in the way. How do I know what injury you have done my horses. See! Give him that."

He threw out a gold coin for the valet to pick up, and all the heads craned forward that all the eyes might look down at it as it fell. The tall man called out again with a most unearthly cry, "Dead!"

He was arrested by the quick arrival of another man, for whom the rest made way. On seeing him, the miserable creature fell upon his shoulder, sobbing and crying, and pointing to the fountain, where some women were stooping over the motionless bundle, and moving

gently about it. They were as silent, however, as the men.

"I know all, I know all," said the last comer. "Be a brave man, my Gaspard! It is better for the poor little plaything to die so, than to live. It has died in a moment without pain. Could it have lived an hour as happily?"

"You are a philosopher, you there," said the Marquis, smiling. "How do they call you?"

"They call me Defarge."

"Of what trade?"

"Monsieur the Marquis, vendor of wine."

"Pick up that, philosopher and vendor of wine," said the Marquis, throwing him another gold coin, "and spend it as you will. The horses there; are they right?"

Without deigning to look at the assemblage a second time, Monsieur the Marquis leaned back in his seat, and was just being driven away with the air of a gentleman who had accidentally broken some common thing, and had paid for it, and could afford to pay for it; when his ease was suddenly disturbed by a coin flying into his carriage and ringing on its floor.

"Hold!" said Monsieur the Marquis. "Hold the horses! Who threw that?"

He looked to the spot where Defarge the vendor of wine had stood, a moment before; but the wretched father was grovelling on his face on the pavement in that spot, and the figure that stood beside him was the figure of a dark stout woman, knitting.

"You dogs!" said the Marquis, but smoothly, and with an unchanged front, except as to the spots on his nose: "I would ride over any of you very willingly, and exterminate you from the earth. If I knew which rascal threw at the carriage, and if that brigand were sufficiently near it, he should be crushed under the wheels."

So cowed was their condition, and so long and so hard their experience of what such a man could do to them, within the law and beyond it, that not a voice, or a hand, or even an eye, was raised. Among the men, not one. But, the woman who stood knitting looked up steadily, and looked the Marquis in the face. It was not for his dignity to notice it; his contemptuous eyes passed over her, and over all the other rats; and he leaned back in his seat again, and gave the word "Go on!"

He was driven on, and other carriages came whirling by in quick succession; the Minister, the State-Projector, the Farmer-General, the Doctor, the Lawyer, the Ecclesiastic, the Grand Opera, the Comedy, the whole Fancy Ball in a bright continuous flow, came whirling by. The rats had crept out of their holes to look on, and they remained looking on for hours; soldiers and police often passing between them and the spectacle, and making a barrier behind which they slunk, and through which they peeped. The father had long ago taken up his bundle and hidden himself away with it, when the women who had tended the bundle while it lay on the base of the fountain, sat there watching the running of the water and the rolling of the Fancy

Ball—when the one woman who had stood conspicuous, knitting, still knitted on with the steadfastness of Fate. The water of the fountain ran, the swift river ran, the day ran into evening, so much life in the city ran into death according to rule, time and tide waited for no man, the rats were sleeping close together in their dark holes again, the Fancy Ball was lighted up at supper, all things ran their course.

CHAPTER VIII. MONSIEUR THE MARQUIS IN THE COUNTRY.

A BEAUTIFUL landscape, with the corn bright in it but not abundant. Patches of poor rye where corn should have been, patches of poor peas and beans, patches of most coarse vegetable substitutes for wheat. On inanimate nature, as on the men and women who cultivated it, a prevalent tendency towards an appearance of vegetating unwillingly—a dejected disposition to give up, and wither away.

Monsieur the Marquis in his travelling carriage (which might have been lighter), conducted by four post-horses and two postilions, fagged up a steep hill. A blush on the countenance of Monsieur the Marquis was no impeachment of his high breeding; it was not from within; it was occasioned by an external circumstance beyond his control—the setting sun.

The sunset struck so brilliantly into the travelling carriage when it gained the hill-top, that its occupant was steeped in crimson. "It will die out," said Monsieur the Marquis, glancing at his hands, "directly."

In effect, the sun was so low that it dipped at the moment. When the heavy drag had been adjusted to the wheel, and the carriage slid down hill, with a cinderous smell, in a cloud of dust, the red glow departed quickly; the sun and the Marquis going down together, there was no glow left when the drag was taken off.

But, there remained a broken country, bold and open, a little village at the bottom of the hill, a broad sweep and rise beyond it, a church-tower, a windmill, a forest for the chase, and a crag with a fortress on it used as a prison. Round upon all these darkening objects as the night drew on, the Marquis looked, with the air of one who was coming near home.

The village had its one poor street, with its poor brewery, poor tannery, poor tavern, poor stable-yard for relays of post-horses, poor fountain, all usual poor appointments. It had its poor people too. All its people were poor, and many of them were sitting at their doors, shredding spare onions and the like for supper, while many were at the fountain, washing leaves, and grasses, and any such small yieldings of the earth that could be eaten. Expressive signs of what made them poor, were not wanting; the tax for the state, the tax for the church, the tax for the lord, tax local and tax general, were to be paid here and to be paid there, according to solemn inscription in the little village, until the wonder was, that there was any village left unswallowed.

Few children were to be seen, and no dogs. As to the men and women, their choice on earth was stated in the prospect—Life on the lowest terms that could sustain it, down in the little village under the mill; or captivity and Death in the dominant prison on the crag.

Heralded by a courier in advance, and by the cracking of his postilions' whips, which twined snake-like about their heads in the evening air, as if he came attended by the Furies, Monsieur the Marquis drew up in his travelling carriage at the posting-house gate. It was hard by the fountain, and the peasants suspended their operations to look at him. He looked at them, and saw in them, without knowing it, the slow sure filing down of misery-worn face and figure, that was to make the meagreness of Frenchmen an English superstition which should survive the truth through the best part of a hundred years.

Monsieur the Marquis cast his eyes over the submissive faces that drooped before him, as the like of himself had drooped before Monseigneur of the Court—only the difference was, that these faces drooped merely to suffer and not to propitiate—when a grizzled mender of the roads joined the group.

"Bring me hither that fellow!" said the Marquis to the courier.

The fellow was brought, cap in hand, and the other fellows closed round to look and listen, in the manner of the people at the Paris fountain.

"I passed you on the road?"

"Monseigneur, it is true. I had the honour of being passed on the road."

"Coming up the hill, and at the top of the hill, both?"

"Monseigneur, it is true."

"What did you look at, so fixedly?"

"Monseigneur, I looked at the man."

He stooped a little, and with his tattered blue cap pointed under the carriage. All his fellows stooped to look under the carriage.

"What man, pig? And why look there?"

"Pardon, Monseigneur; he swung by the chain of the shoe—the drag."

"Who?" demanded the traveller.

"Monseigneur, the man."

"May the Devil carry away these idiots! How do you call the man? You know all the men of this part of the country. Who was he?"

"Your clemency, Monseigneur! He was not of this part of the country. Of all the days of my life, I never saw him."

"Swinging by the chain? To be suffocated?"

"With your gracious permission, that was the wonder of it, Monseigneur. His head hanging over—like this!"

He turned himself sideways to the carriage, and leaned back, with his face thrown up to the sky, and his head hanging down; then recovered himself, fumbled with his cap, and made a bow.

"What was he like?"

"Monseigneur, he was whiter than the miller. All covered with dust, white as a spectre, tall as a spectre!"

The picture produced an immense sensation in the little crowd; but all eyes, without comparing notes with other eyes, looked at Monsieur the Marquis. Perhaps, to observe whether he had any spectre on his conscience.

"Truly, you did well," said the Marquis, felicitously sensible that such vermin were not to ruffle him, "to see a thief accompanying my carriage, and not open that great mouth of yours. Bah! Put him aside, Monsieur Gabelle!"

Monsieur Gabelle was the Postmaster, and some other taxing functionary, united; he had come out with great obsequiousness to assist at this examination, and had held the examined by the drapery of his arm in an official manner.

"Bah! Go aside!" said Monsieur Gabelle.

"Lay hands on this stranger if he seeks to lodge in your village to-night, and be sure that his business is honest, Gabelle."

"Monseigneur, I am flattered to devote myself to your orders."

"Did he run away, fellow?—where is that Accursed?"

The accursed was already under the carriage with some half-dozen particular friends, pointing out the chain with his blue cap. Some half-dozen other particular friends promptly haled him out, and presented him breathless to Monsieur the Marquis.

"Did the man run away, Dolt, when we stopped for the drag?"

"Monseigneur, he precipitated himself over the hill-side, head first, as a person plunges into the river."

"See to it, Gabelle. Go on!"

The half-dozen who were peering at the chain were still among the wheels, like sheep; the wheels turned so suddenly that they were lucky to save their skins and bones; they had very little else to save, or they might not have been so fortunate.

The burst with which the carriage started out of the village and up the rise beyond, was soon checked by the steepness of the hill. Gradually, it subsided to a foot pace, swinging and lumbering upward among the many sweet scents of a summer night. The postilions, with a thousand gossamer gnats circling about them in lieu of the Furies, quietly mended the points to the lashes of their whips; the valet walked by the horses; the courier was audible, trotting on ahead into the dim distance.

At the steepest point of the hill there was a little burial-ground, with a Cross and a new large figure of Our Saviour on it; it was a poor figure in wood, done by some inexperienced rustic carver, but he had studied the figure from the life—his own life, maybe—for it was dreadfully spare and thin.

To this distressful emblem of a great distress that had long been growing worse, and was not at its worst, a woman was kneeling. She turned her head as the carriage came up to her, rose quickly, and presented herself at the carriage-door.

"It is you, Monseigneur! Monseigneur, a petition!"

With an exclamation of impatience, but with his unchangeable face, the Marquis looked out.

"How, then! What is it? Always petitions!"

"Monseigneur. For the love of the great God! My husband, the forester."

"What of your husband, the forester? Always the same with you people. He cannot pay something?"

"He has paid all, Monseigneur. He is dead."

"Well! He is quiet. Can I restore him to you?"

"Alas no, Monseigneur! But he lies yonder, under a little heap of poor grass."

"Well?"

"Monseigneur, there are so many little heaps of poor grass."

"Again, well?"

She looked an old woman, but was young. Her manner was one of passionate grief; by turns she clasped her veinous and knotted hands together with wild energy, and laid one of them on the carriage-door—tenderly, caressingly, as if it had been a human breast, and could be expected to feel the appealing touch.

"Monseigneur, hear me! Monseigneur, hear my petition! My husband died of want; so many die of want; so many more will die of want."

"Again, well? Can I feed them?"

"Monseigneur, the good God knows; but I don't ask it. My petition is, that a morsel of stone or wood, with my husband's name, may be placed over him to show where he lies. Otherwise, the place will be quickly forgotten, it will never be found when I am dead of the same malady, I shall be laid under some other heap of poor grass. Monseigneur, they are so many, they increase so fast, there is so much want. Monseigneur! Monseigneur!"

The valet had put her away from the door, the carriage had broken into a brisk trot, the postillions had quickened the pace, she was left far behind, and the Marquis, again escorted by the Furies, was rapidly diminishing the league or two of distance that remained between him and his château.

The sweet scents of the summer night rose all around him, and rose, as the rain falls, impartially, on the dusty, ragged, and toil-worn group at the fountain not far away; to whom the mender of roads, with the aid of the blue cap without which he was nothing, still enlarged upon his man like a spectre, as long as they could bear it. By degrees, as they could bear no more, they dropped off one by one, and lights twinkled in little casements; which lights, as the casements darkened, and more stars came out, seemed to have shot up into the sky instead of having been extinguished.

The shadow of a large high-roofed house, and of many overhanging trees, was upon Monsieur the Marquis by that time; and the shadow was exchanged for the light of a flambeau, as his carriage stopped, and the great door of his château was opened to him.

"Monsieur Charles, whom I expect; is he arrived from England?"

"Monseigneur, not yet."

TOO MUCH FREEDOM ON THE SEAS.

THE time should be gone by when we look for an outlaw in the bold sea captain; but there is still a restricted sense, and that a very painful one, in which the master of a trading vessel on the high seas is an outlaw. He may be an outlaw, just, honest, and merciful, whose right mind is his sufficient lawgiver and judge. Happy are they who row in the same boat with him! He may be unjust, dishonest, and merciless: one who can be terrified only by the horsehair of the law, and punished only by suffering and loss. When such a man has others beneath his control, and is himself subject to no control, woe to his victims! Men rougher than the seas they traverse, and more pitiless, are among those who command, in merchant vessels trading between England and America, as masters; or, more commonly have power as mates. These men are not types of the true American or English sailor. Honest Saxon seafarers born on either side of the Atlantic must and do condemn them; must desire that they shall not disgrace by their atrocities a great national calling, and escape swift retribution. There is no difficult and narrow question between English and American of mutual rights in this matter. What question there is, can readily be settled to the full content of all people who speak the English language.

A Liverpool Merchant, in a published letter, calls attention to "Unpunished Cruelties on the High Seas." At Liverpool they excite particular attention, because there is visible and constant evidence of their result. One or two hundred hospital patients who have been struck down by cruelties endured on board American ships, are every year under medical or surgical care, as "consul's cases." Into the den of London there comes much of the same kind of suffering; but its cry cannot so well be heard. It does, we believe, happen that cruelty is more common in the mercantile marine of the United States than in that of England. But, on board the merchant ships of the United States, hardly one man in five is a native American. Of the last ten cases of cruelty sent back to the United States for trial, not one had an American for defendant, and, in five of them, the criminals were natives of Great Britain. This is no discussion, therefore, about purging others of offence. The Bogota, in which a demoniacal cruelty was inflicted, was an English vessel. But it happens that the part of the case which presents itself in the form most available for purposes of explanation concerns merchant ships of the United States trading with Liverpool.

If an offence be committed in a foreign ship while actually lying in an English river, it is punishable by the English law; but, if it be committed in an American ship some four miles from the shore, all that can be done is this: the

American consul requires that the accused be delivered up to him, in order that he may be sent to the United States for trial. This is the operation of the Extradition Treaty of the year forty-two, but practically it occurs only with respect to the crimes of murder, or assault with intent to murder, robbery, piracy, arson, forgery, and the utterance of forged papers. Ordinary assault cases, even when they issue in manslaughter, cannot be tried in England. Neither are they despatched for trial to the other side of the Atlantic, and may therefore be committed with impunity. Three years ago, the body of a man, killed by the third mate of an American ship, was brought ashore at Liverpool. A coroner's jury sat upon it, and brought in a verdict of manslaughter. The American consul applied for the prisoner, in order that he might be sent back to America for trial. But our Home-office decided that the offence was not referred to in the treaty. The offender, therefore, was set free.

Even when the consul has his prisoner, so that he may enforce his return home for trial, he cannot compel all the witnesses to recross the Atlantic for the sake of giving evidence. They possibly may have, or fancy that they have, more profitable business to be looked after elsewhere; or they may sail back, and yet be lost for purposes of justice. In the middle of last December, the *Étiwan*, an American ship, was in the Mersey, not abreast of Liverpool, but about two miles and a half north-west of the Crosby light-ship. A seaman on board attacked the second mate fiercely, stabbed him twice on the cheek, and nine times more on other parts of the body. The prisoner's defence was that the English court had no jurisdiction over him, because a ship two or three miles north-west of the Crosby light-ship was not legally within the port of Liverpool. This plea, after much discussion, was allowed to be good, and the prisoner was sent for trial to America, at an expense of a hundred pounds. Two sufficient witnesses were despatched with him. The witnesses, having landed, disappeared on business of their own, and the ruffian, after all the trouble taken, had to be discharged from custody.

A second mate, who by knocking a man off the yard had caused his death, was to be sent back to the United States for trial; but no offers of the consul could persuade the material witness, who was a Spaniard, to go back and give his evidence. In every such case the prisoner must go unpunished.

The great mass, however, of the unpunished offences are the ordinary cruelties that can never come before a court at all; being beyond the jurisdiction of our English law, and below notice in a treaty. The American consul has, indeed, a power of his own to take revenge upon the pocket of the captain (and the captain only) in a vessel on board of which a man has suffered wrongful hurt. He may compel him to pay three months' extra wages to the sufferer. Yet it is only in a few cases that the captain has been himself the offender, and, in many cases, it is he who has pro-

tested some poor victim from a brutal mate. Again, for injured men sent to the hospital as consul's cases from a ship newly come into port, the consul pays twelve shillings a week, which he recovers from the captain. This arrangement, of course, overlooks all minor cases, and leaves many wretched sufferers to find their way, not to the hospital, but to the workhouse. In Liverpool, there is a Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress, which is in the habit of attending to some cases of ill-usage that do not reach the hospital.

Many of these victims of cruelty were no doubt disappointed emigrants, or other wretched men ignorant of seamanship, who had engaged rashly to work their passage home, and suffered heavily for their incompetence. Others are men, not seamen, who were trepanned on board by vessels pressed for time and short of hands. The Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress met with a broken-down German who had been sent as a clerk on business to a vessel and detained in it; another German was engaged as a steward; others were engaged as surgeons. All were crushed with sailors' work.

What cruelty on shipboard is, we have all heard again and again. Our present purpose is, to assist in urging that it shall not be committed with impunity. Let there be no right of outlawry pertaining to the open sea.

A NEW SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

IN FIVE PARTS.

PART III.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

It was at the end of a fortnight spent in an hotel—a good hotel, and in a fashionable quarter—that there entered my head a thought, which had previously kept its distance.

It was at the end of a fortnight that it slowly dawned upon me that, what with dinners at expensive cafés, what with orchestra stalls, what with irresistible gloves, mechanical hats, opportunities of getting boots of French leather and similar mad extravagances, I was spending a great deal of money. And the hotel bill! Let us face that bill at once. Let us see where we are.

I received that bill with a calm and guarded countenance, with a gentlemanly air and a gay smile. But my soul sank within me aghast at its proportions. Its proportions, indeed, were such that it became highly desirable that now for a season I should economise exceedingly. So much the better. It has been said that a man may live cheaply in Paris. I will make trial of the experiment. Let me live no longer in hotels. Let me seek a lodgment. Let me rough it. Let me hug penury to my soul. Let my pomp take phisic, and let me expose myself to feel what wretches feel. My mails are made, my bill is paid, and a sweet little column of napoleons—a little pile of gold—and I have parted company for ever. Now let me prow about unfashionable quarters, and when I have secured a room of cheapness, let me return for my luggage, and have it out with squalor.

"Yes, dear and admirable lady, the chamber is, as you remark, a pleasant one, but then you say it will not be vacant for four days, and I want to come in at once."

"Well, but here is another room—would I mind occupying that till the pleasant one is empty? It is not quite such a nice chamber, certainly, but——"

No, it certainly is not. The bed is short. The room is small and fusty, and half filled up with a gigantic china stove. But then four nights—'tis not long. "Very well, I will take it, and there's an end. I come in to-night."

Fatal, fatal decision. Why did I not vacillate, as all sensible people should? Why did I make up my mind in that absurd manner? Oh Indecision!—dear, wise, prudent, looking-before-you-leap, much-abused, invaluable quality—why did I not listen to you then?

Oh Indecision! why this dead set against thee on every hand? How often hast thou stood me in good stead. I will surely one day write an essay on thee, in thy defence, and prove how many things (besides that marriage with Amelia Long) thou hast rescued me from, which would have been pernicious in the extreme.

And thou wouldst—dear one—have rescued me from that chamber of horrors if I had but listened to thee—for thou wert tugging at my heart and saying "don't" all the time I was committing myself.

If the man in the lounging-cap and the dressing-gown, with the smile and the evil countenance, who received me on my arrival at my lodgings with my luggage—if he had shown me over the house in the first instance instead of employing his wife for the purpose, I should never have taken the apartment. However, it was too late now to recede, so I could only determine to make the best of it and to keep out of the house as much as possible.

Out of it at once, just depositing my baggage and looking round with horror. Out of the fusty room, and away to dinner and the play.

Hang it, though, I forgot: economy is to be the order of the day. I must have a cheap dinner, and as to the play, well suppose, just for a night or two, I was to give that luxury up? What's this? a dinner for two francs and a quarter. That's my affair. "Why give more?" as the advertisements say, when they want us to purchase South African port, or anything else equally cheap and (if there is anything of which it may be said) equally nasty.

How many legs has a fowl, my child?—Two.—And how many wings?—Two.—Then if I go into a tavern and ask for some chicken, the chance of my getting a wing is equal to that of my being served with a leg?—Yes, sir; the chances are equal.—Are they?

Where is the individual who ever went into a tavern, and calling for some chicken, was provided with a wing? He does not exist, or if he does, is about as common as a man who would fail to look into the mirror twelve times per hour when he is growing a mous—Stop!

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

WE were talking of economy. Of economy, and the legs of fowls. The two things go well together.

Economy and Paris do *not* go well together. It was economy that led me, as described in the last chapter but one, to cross the threshold of the Café Cartilagineux, which is as nasty a tavern as you will find anywhere. How should it be otherwise when you get soup, fish, an entrée, a roast, a sweet, a bottle of wine, and a dessert, for two francs and a quarter, and with a choice of two dishes in every one of the departments which I have mentioned. It was this possibility of choice, by-the-by, which led to a piece of politeness on the part of an old French officer, for which I shall ever be grateful. Bewildered by a most mysterious name which was appended to one of the dishes on the carte, I was questioning the waiter very closely about it, but being able to get nothing out of him, except that it was "excellent," I determined to judge for myself, and was just ordering it to be brought, when an old officer, decorated with the Legion of Honour, who sat behind me, and had evidently overheard my conversation with the waiter, this old gentleman, touching me on the shoulder, said, with a polite bow and a smile, "Eccuse me, sare, you veel not laike it. It is bluid of peeg."

I shall be ever thankful to the man who saved me from eating "blood of pig," especially at the Café Cartilagineux, and I hope, if he meets with the present number of this periodical, that he will accept this public testimony of my gratitude in a kindly spirit.

"The uses of adversity" may be sweet; nay, they *are* so, we know it on good authority, but woe to the man whose adversity compels him to have a cheap dinner at Paris.

In London a man may have a chop, potatoes, and a pint of bitter ale, all admirable of their kind, at a very economical rate—a dinner that anybody might sit down to. In Paris, if you seek a corresponding meal, which would be a "bifteck" surrounded with potatoes, you must go to a wretched hole to eat it, because at any place where this dish would be served in an eatable condition, you would be treated with contempt if you ordered so small a dinner. It is a vile arrangement. You have the same dinner for two francs at the Café Cagmag that you get for twelve at Véfours's. Only in one case all the dishes are disgustingly bad, and in the other inconceivably good.

Except at Byron's Tavern, an English house at the back of the Opera Comique, where there is a table d'hôte at three francs a head, you cannot get a cheap dinner in Paris. That is to say, a dinner which a man with a palate can eat without loathing. Let this be distinctly understood. It is very important.

There are in this world persons without palates. I write not for them. Let them fill their stomachs with garbage at the Café Cartilagineux, and come out triumphant with a toothpick in their mouths, or let them go to a

wine-shop and masticate a "bifteek" swimming in oily butter, washed down with draughts of wine which resembles red ink in consistency and flavour. For such men I write not. For those who mind what they eat it is, I think, impossible to dine at Paris (except at the tavern I have mentioned above) for less than six or seven francs, including everything.

I am going to tell the reader a thing for which he may laugh at me if he will.

Although I never went to the Café Cartilagineux without execrating its fare, I yet found in that place of entertainment one source of attraction which caused me to take my meal of horseflesh there more frequently than suited my organs of digestion or my sense of taste.

At the buffet which stands in the middle of the large room in which the bad dinners are served there sits a middle-aged matron of comfortable appearance, whose function it is to make out the bills, to distribute the bits of sugar for coffee, and otherwise to superintend the general cartilaginous arrangements of the Café.

Seated beside this personage, and enclosed behind the buffet as within the outworks of a fortification, there would be found occasionally—but not always—a young girl, her daughter—a pearl of loveliness.

I have never seen a more refined or exalted beauty. I have never seen a human being so misplaced. I know neither modesty nor goodness when I see them, if this girl (to whom I never spoke a word in my life) was not possessed of a pure and loving soul.

What a combination was here. What an instance of that irony of which one sees examples in every hour of life. Consider it well. In this scene of French tavern existence, of common feeding, of vile meat and viler cookery, in this sickly atmosphere of stews and gravies, of weaky soups and leggy fowls, in this din of squalor, in this sordid environment, there is found a jewel, for which the gilding of a palace would be a mean and unworthy sitting.

Strange and terrible anomaly! Sudden and bewildering transition. Straight, and at one step, from the ridiculous to the sublime, from grossest garbage to most glorious beauty, from rough and vulgar discord to a strain of harmony that holds the senses rapt.

Must I own that I often went to this wretched tavern, simply that I might have the pleasure of sitting near this charming creature, that I found a sense of companionship in the mere fact of being in the room with her—and that I never left that miserable café but in a gentler mood than when I entered it. Must I own this, and hear the reader say, "This is either a boy of eighteen, or an idiot." Yet I am neither—or at any rate I am not eighteen. I have almost forgotten that I ever was. It must be, then, that I am idiotic—to go and eat bad dinners that I may be in the room with the guardian of a side-board.

If it is not easy to dine cheap at Paris, it is equally difficult to go to the play in an economical manner. At some of the theatres, it is

true, there are besides the "fauteuils d'orchestre," a range of places between them and the pit, called "stalles d'orchestre," in which you can sit with some degree of ease, at a moderate expenditure. An admirable arrangement by-the-by, which may be seen, together with all other admirable arrangements, at our own new Adelphi.

The stalles d'orchestre, however, are not to be met with in all the Parisian theatres, and woe to the man who buries himself in delusive "pau-tours" or "baignoires." Woe still more to him who ascends. The heat, the absence of ventilation (rendered so much more unendurable by the closing of all the box doors), these things prevent a man from taking any pleasure in what is going on.

The tyranny of officials in Paris is seen everywhere, and is perfectly unbearable. Routine is adhered to and enforced, as in this matter of the hermetical sealing of box doors, in a manner very difficult to submit to. The French mob are strangely and inconsistently submissive in all these matters, and allow themselves to be treated like children.

The cheap dinner and the cheap theatrical experience, then, being alike unsatisfactory, let us now go home to our apartment and see how we like the cheap lodgings. Perhaps the room may look nicer with the bed made. Unhappily there is one defect about that bed though, which all the making in the world will never remedy. It is so desperately and insanely short. I know by measurement that I can never be comfortable in that bed. By measurement, I say. I tested the length of that couch with my umbrella while there was nobody looking. I am two umbrellas long, and that bed measures an umbrella and three-quarters. How can I hope for rest? How can a man sleep peacefully in a bed which is a quarter of an umbrella too short for him? I must make up my mind to it, however. There is no remedy, let there be no regret. Let me—What's this?—I am grasping the sheet in my hand to test its dryness—Damp? No, not damp—wet—wringing wet. Ha! ha!—a short bed and a damp, eh? We will lie down in our clothes.

Lying down in your clothes is a pleasant and refreshing process. But why does it make you feel the next morning as if you had been beaten with clubs from head to foot—as if you had been intoxicated overnight? Why does no amount of washing make you feel clean? Why do your limbs ache, and why are your eyes full of sand? Lying down in your clothes is just better than rheumatic fever—and that's all.

Yet I had two nights of it. For I had taken such an aversion to the room and to the house I was lodging in, that the day after my first experience of the damp sheets I fled from the shelter of the odious walls and kept out all day. It was the day of that walk in the suburbs, of which more is said elsewhere. I deluded myself with vain hopes that the sheets would get dry of themselves. But they did nothing of the kind, and I was compelled to seek a trousered repose once more.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

THERE is a bolt upon the door. Let it do its office: I'm at home to nobody—nor must anybody read this chapter but those who are prepared to go into a domestic matter of great interest, but of an essentially private nature.

I cannot and will not stand another night of sleeping in my clothes. It is not to be endured. What must I do then? The sheets are not a bit less damp than they were the first night. There remains but one course open to me: I must air my bedding. Won't remonstrate, the thing must be done.

First of all a roaring fire in the china stove. What a fire! What a stove! How it roars and cracks with metallic snappings in the chimney! I wish it may not burst suddenly, and fall into the midst of the room a mass of heated china, of fiery fuel, and red-hot iron chimney. That china stove is so large and gets so hot, that very soon I feel as if the marrow in my bones was dried up and turned to powder. My tongue rattles against the roof of my mouth. Asphyxia will ensue unless something is done to air the room. The window must be opened. Impossible, it won't stir: it is a French window, opening—or rather *not* opening—down the middle. A plague upon the French window! I don't believe it's ever been opened in its life. I am getting angry: tug, pull, rattle, shake—no use. Knee against lower part of window-frame: now tug, pull, rattle, shake, again—no result whatever. Hold top of window with left hand and repeat the shaking process with right—worse and worse! And all this exertion in a room with no air in it, only stove smoke and mephitic vapour! I shall suffocate—I shall go mad—I shall have to break a pane of glass! One more mighty pull, with all my force and all my weight thrown into a last despairing effort: window opens suddenly without the slightest show of resistance, and I am flung upon my back contused and stunned. Never mind, the window is opened. Now for the grand event of the day—now for an assault upon the bedding.

Yes, a mattress is a difficult thing to manage all alone when you've got it off the bed, and when the room is small, and when there is a great deal of large furniture about, and when a stove, which singes everything that touches it, fills up two-thirds of the apartment. It is at such a time, I repeat, that a gentleman unaccustomed to mattresses will find that they are afflicted with a weakness which renders them ever ready to droop upon his head as he carries them in his arms, leaving more flue upon his hair than he is usually in the habit of wearing. He will also find that they are apt, when placed before the fire, to double up in unexpected places, and to lean over heavily when propped against chairs, while the chairs themselves, on a highly polished oak floor, will not uncommonly slide back from the pressure of the mattress, and allow it to sink with aggravating languor to the ground.

It is much easier to deal with the blankets and sheets; for, once get the mattress to stand

up upon its edge, and you can lay the other articles which require airing over it, and range them in a semicircle round the fire. Yes, this is much easier, and now I have succeeded in surrounding the china stove with a perfect amphitheatre of bedding. "Capital," I say to myself, "I shall get between the sheets to-night, at any rate—I shall—What's that? Well, it's a tap at the door.

"Who's there?" I hawl.

"A gentleman," says the voice of my landlord, "wishes to see the room. As I am going to leave it in two days, will I allow him to enter."

What can I do but unbolt the door and admit them.

The man with the lounging-cap and the dressing-gown, and the evil smile, comes in, accompanied by a grave and short gentleman, who will fit the bed nicely—that man is not more than an umbrella and a half long, I know. "Pouf!" says the short gentleman, on entering the apartment, and I dare say it *does* strike hot, coming out of the air. "Pouf!" says the man with the lounging-cap and the evil eye. After one glance at the condition of the room, he never takes that eye off me, and never ceases to smile; but it is the tight smile with closed lips that indicates malice. The man who smiles like that will never forgive the implied dampness of his linen.

The conduct of the short gentleman is delicate in the extreme. He looks at the clock on the chimney-piece, at the floor, out of window, makes remarks on the prospect—does everything, in short, but look at the bedding before the stove. Bless him for it. As he leaves the room he waves his hand towards the table which is covered with manuscript, and says that he fears he has "deranged me." Blessings upon the head of that short Frenchman. "It is such delicacy as this," I said to myself, one hour afterwards—it took me an hour to recover—"it is such delicacy as this which has won for the French nation that reputation for a refined politeness which they deserve so well. What shall we say of such politeness. It warms the heart of him towards whom it is exercised with admiration, and fills him with a glow of gratitude. Nay, at this moment, while I think and write of it, it has made my heart feel lighter and more loving to all the world.

Alas, that this courtesy (I am obliged by truth to own it) is often of little value as showing a good heart. Alas, that one of the best and most generous men I know (it is my friend Growler of whom I am speaking) is at the same time so disagreeable and offensive in his manners that it is a pain to be in the room with him.

I did not make all these reflections, as I have said, till long after the short gentleman and the man with the lounging-cap had left the apartment. After bolting the door upon them, I fell down upon the mattress (which had taken the opportunity of its owner's entrance to sink upon the floor and do obeisance before him)—I fell, I say, upon the mattress, and remained speechless, with my mind a blank for thirty-five minutes by my aunt Jones's repeater.

At the expiration of which time I arose, and set myself to work to replace the bedding, which I had now aired to my satisfaction, and which, in case of any more visitors arriving, it would be as well to have in its place.

THE CLOWN'S SONG.

"HERE I am!"—and the House rejoices;
Forth I tumble from out the slaps;
"Here I am!"—and a hundred voices
Welcome me on with laughing lips.

The Master, with easy pride,
Treads the sawdust down;
Or quickens the horse's stride,
And calls for his jesting clown.

"What, ho, Mr. Merriman!—Dick,
Here's a lady that wants your place."
I throw them a Somerset, quick,
And grin in some beauty's face.

I tumble, and jump, and chaff,
And fill them with wild delights;

Whatever my sorrow, I laugh,
Thro' the summer and winter nights.

I joke with the men, if I dare;
Do they strike, why I cringe and stoop;
And I ride like a bird in air,
And I jump through the blazing hoop.

Whatever they say or do,
I am ready with joke and jibe;
And, whenever the jests are new
I follow, like all my tribe.

But life is not all a jest,
Whatever the wise ones say;
For when I steal home to rest
(And I seek it at dawn of day),

If winter, there is no fire;
If summer, there is no air:
My welcome's a hungry choir
Of children, and scanty fare.

My wife is as lean a scold
As famine can make man's wife;
We are both of us sour and old
With drinking the dregs of life.

Yet, why do I sigh? I wonder
Would the "Pit" or the "Boxes" sigh,
Should I wash off my paint, and, under,
Show how a Fool must die?

OUR EYE-WITNESS.

We are about to introduce a new personage to the reader; or rather we are about to reveal in his true character a person with whom the reader is already slightly acquainted. Let the introduction take place with all the proper ceremony, and with due formality: Reader, Mr. David Fudge—Mr. David Fudge, Reader.

"Very happy," says reader, "to make the acquaintance of a gentleman with whose works I am so familiar—remember your charming description of—hum, ha, charming indeed—ha, hum."

And then the reader turns aside to us, the introducer, and asks in an under tone, "Who is he?" We reply that he is simply an observant gentleman who goes about with his eyes and ears open, who notes everything that comes in his way, and who has furnished to this periodical certain results of his faculty of observation. We further state that Mr. Fudge is familiarly

known among his associates in labour as "the eye-witness," because he either has, or says he has, seen everything he describes. As our eye-witness, he undertook to report to us what he observed when he went to see the "Talking Fish," and anything that might strike him at the "Derby."

This is the report that he sends in:

Your eye-witness begs to report himself as having returned safe from the Derby.

He has also been to see the "Talking Fish."

Concerning the first of these Institutions he is not going to say anything except that he started smart and joyous, and returned dirty and penitent; that, having lost his money on "brother to Somebody," he objects henceforth to all race-horses who are relatives of distinguished characters; and prefers those that go upon their own merits; that a facetious stranger, one of a large party on the top of an omnibus, invited him to ascend and witness the race with the assurance that there was "plenty of room on the top of the whip," and that he finally *did* witness the race while executing a remarkable "act" of balancing with one foot on the edge of the hood of a phaeton, the other on a basket of provisions three feet distant, and with nothing to hold on by but the hat of a gentleman who was much intoxicated, and who was standing upon the spoke of a wheel, and a walking-stick.

So much for what your eye-witness observed at the Derby. Now for what he remarked when he assisted at the Exhibition of the Talking Fish, on Tuesday, the thirty-first of May—a thunderous and overcast day.

He remarked that this animal would be described with propriety as the Talking Fish, but for two circumstances—it is *not* a fish, and it does *not* talk. In the nine days appropriated to this wonder, no one appears to have noticed this little error in description. Under these circumstances your eye-witness is mistrustful of himself. Is he labouring under some delusion? Is a seal a fish? Is barking like a dog talking?

Perhaps it is. Perhaps the animal is not exhibited in Piccadilly; perhaps Piccadilly is not Piccadilly but Pall-mall; perhaps there is no equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington on Constitution-hill; perhaps it is easy to dance with ladies who wear hoops; perhaps they don't wear them at all; perhaps your eye-witness is perfectly happy; perhaps he has a large fortune; perhaps he didn't lose on the Derby; perhaps there is not a tree outside his bedroom window and a sparrow watching him from its branches as he writes; perhaps there is no war in Sardinia; perhaps the French alliance is a sound one; perhaps the Emperor of the French is unaffectedly fond of England; perhaps it was an unselfish thing to get up a dissolution of Parliament at the particular moment when it *was* got up; perhaps there was no dissolution at all; perhaps it is easy to cross over at the Regent-circus, Oxford-street; perhaps the New Adelphi is not a comfortable theatre; perhaps there is no humbug in advertisements; perhaps—perhaps a barking seal is a Talking Fish.

When your eye-witness entered the exhibition room, and when he saw it lying at the bottom of its tub, he was struck first of all by the creature's eyes, by their intelligence, their soft beauty, and by the glance of helpless appeal which it directed from one to the other of the faces by which it was surrounded. This was what struck him first. Then it struck him that, if convenient, he should like to have a large ship ready in the Pool of London, to convey the Talking Fish back to the coast of Africa from which it had been brought; then it struck him that as this was perhaps *not* convenient, he should like to have a rifle loaded with ball, with full liberty to discharge the same at the head of the poor seal, and so put her out of her misery at once and for all. These different inclinations having passed through the head of your eye-witness, and there appealing to be obstacles to the gratification of every one of them, it occurred to him next to resign himself to circumstances, to look about him, and see what was going on.

Nothing was going on. A large seal was lying at the bottom of an immense tub, round which about twenty persons were standing with their mouths open, wondering when the performance was to begin. The seal appeared to be almost in a torpid state, except when, as has been described above, it turned from time to time its languid eyes to the faces round the bath, looking from one to the other with vexed perplexity. It uttered, too, at intervals a sharp and painful cry, which was accompanied by a snapping sound, occasioned probably by the meeting of its teeth. A fat man, whom your witness liked, who spoke kindly to the seal; another man like a foreign ambassador, or Royal Duke, whom your witness disliked, who spoke savagely to the seal; and a faint-hearted man, whom your witness regarded in a negative light, who spoke childishly to the seal, seemed all to have a share in exhibiting the animal, and all tried, in their different ways, to make the poor beast exert itself.

It has been said that the seal uttered now and then a cry like a bark. This was only at intervals at first; but when the Royal Duke, mounting on a "coign of vantage," commenced a scientific lecture on the animal, which was, he said, to be "the subject of a few remarks," the seal took to barking violently and frequently, and at last never left off at all, taking it evidently as an insult that it should be lectured upon, and determining that not a word that was said about its nature and habits should reach the public. The Talking Fish not only declined to talk itself, but was an enemy to talkativeness in others.

"The extraordinary animal," the lecturer began—"the extraordinary animal—bow-wow—subject of the present exhibition—bow-wow, bow-wow—on the coast of Africa—bow-wow—mouth of the—bow-wow—river—bow-wow, bow-wow—disputed point—bow-wow—naturalists—bow-wow—indeed Professor—bow-wow—expresses himself to this effect—bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow—while that eminent comparative anatomist, Dr.—bow-wow—in treating on this subject—bow-wow, bow-

wow—in his work on the function of—bow-wow—has been understood to say—bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow—

This was all that was audible of the lecture, the rest was lost in an uninterrupted volley of barking of the loudest and most overpowering description. The Royal Duke descended from his bad eminence in evident disgust, and saying to the faint-hearted man, "See what you can do with her," proceeded to look moodily on as if he were a spectator from outside, and to lash with many taunts the faint-hearted man, who for his part had evidently no hope of the seal from the beginning. The Talking Fish, it must be mentioned, was a female talking fish, and her name it seemed was Jenny.

"Will um's Jenny come and kiss um's hand?" said the faint-hearted man, leaning over the tub to address the seal. "No, of course she won't," he added, when the seal declined the invitation with a bark of disgust; "I knew she wouldn't."

"You've got no perseverance," said the Royal Duke; "why don't you go on at her till she does?"

"Much better leave her alone," said the fat man. "Poor Jenny," he continued, stooping over the bath. The seal rose up out of the water, and lifting up her face, kissed him as he uttered the words. "Poor Jenny," said the fat man, "have they been beating you, Jenny?"

Had they? Why did Jenny wince when the Royal Duke happened to wave his hand; why did she wince, and, shrinking away to the other end of the bath, look again from face to face in mute but strong appeal. Poor Jenny!

"Try her again," said the Royal Duke to the faint-hearted man.

"What's the good?" answered that despondent gentleman.

"Never mind asking, 'What's the good?'" retorted the Regal Potentate, "but try her again."

The gentleman who, according to the proverb, was disqualified for the winning of fair ladies, *did* try her again.

"Um's Jenny's naughty lickle girl not to kiss um's hand—come zen, kiss um's hand," said the faint-hearted man. There," he continued, when this appeal proved no more successful than the last—"there, what did I tell you? Are you satisfied now?"

"No," said the Royal Duke, "I'm not. Try showing her some fish."

"Give um's Jenny pretty lickle fish, if um's Jenny 'll kiss um's hand," said the faint-hearted man, showing a highly flavoured flounder to the unfortunate animal.

The Talking Fish, knowing it would not get the flounder, or perhaps not liking the smell of it, remained stationary at the other end of the bath, and sure enough the flounder was taken away again and put into a basket whose perfume was not agreeable.

"Oh, hang it!" the fat man interposed, "don't break faith with a fellow—with a fish, I mean—like that. Give it to her. What's the good of tantalising her like that?"

"What's the good of anything?" said the despondent man. This was one of those propo-

sitions of a general nature which nobody present seemed capable of grappling with; so the faint-hearted man went on: "When she says she won't do a thing, she won't."

"You've no perseverance," said the Royal Duke. "Try her again."

"Try her yourself," retorted the faint-hearted man.

"Come here, Jenny," said the Royal Duke, in a fierce tone. The seal came across the bath to where he stood, looked timidly up at him, and slunk away to the other end of the tank.

Such was the exhibition at which your eye-witness assisted with a heavy heart. Sometimes the regal-looking personage, dragging the seal about by the skin of its back, and, pushing it violently across the bath, would force it almost into the mouth of the faint-hearted man, who was the chief exhibitor. On these occasions she would, in desperation, raise her head and breast out of the water and put her lips to his mouth. Sometimes she would half present him with a fin. But where was the talking? Was this the animal for whose feats of dialogue the public had been prepared by a placard stuck on every dead wall in London, representing a British sailor in earnest conversation, not to say argument, with an enormous codfish standing upright upon the tip of its tail? Was this all?

No, this was not all. To the eye of your witness there was exhibited the heart of that poor seal. He read it through her eyes; and, in it, read a tale of sorrow that made his own heart sad, and caused him for a moment reverently to hope that even for the sufferings of the brute creation there may be some compensating good in store. He hoped this as far as might consist with romance, and it comforted him; for the eyes of that seal, their expression, and the capability of feeling which they seemed to indicate, haunted him as he left the place, and are before him now while he writes.

There is, in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy this year, a picture by Sir Edwin Landseer, which has been received somewhat unmercifully, and which yet—besides possessing many pictorial beauties of a high grade—is, in its dim suggestion of a hope that even the lower animals are not wholly excluded from a share in the scheme of Heaven's mercy, very beautiful. It is the work of one who, as has been said, suggests this rather than asserts it. The minds of those who feel deeply will at times stretch forward thus in a strong sympathy with the sufferings of creation, and will strain to get a glimpse beyond that glass through which we see so darkly.

The Talking Fish declined to talk. And yet to your eye-witness she *did* talk, and oh, how plainly! How plainly, as she worked herself round and round, and looked from face to face, how plainly she spoke, not with her mouth, indeed, but with her wistful eyes.

"What have I done?" she said—"what have I done, that this misery should have come upon me? What is this close and stifling room? What are these faces that gaze at me in my

prison? Why am I here? Where is the sea that used to stretch around me further than my eyes could follow? Where the mighty river at whose mouth I lived? Where the sun, in which I loved to bask? Where is my mate? They have taken him from me, and killed him. Oh that they would kill me too, and deliver me from this dreadful place!

THE SECOND SITTING.

WE left (at page 189) Monsieur Werdet successful, after some preliminary disappointment and humiliation, in his first literary treaty with Balzac. We left him, the happy proprietor and hopeful publisher of the second edition of *Le Médecin de Campagne*.

Once started, Monsieur Werdet was too wise a man not to avail himself of the only certain means of success in modern times. He puffed magnificently. Every newspaper in Paris was inundated with a deluge of advertisements, announcing the forthcoming work in terms of eulogy such as the wonderstruck reader had never met with before. The result, aided by Balzac's celebrity, was a phenomenon in the commercial history of French literature, at that time. Every copy of the second edition of *Le Médecin de Campagne* was sold in eight days.

This success established Monsieur Werdet's reputation. Young authors crowded to him with their manuscripts, all declaring piteously that they wrote in the style of Balzac. But Monsieur Werdet flew at higher game. He received the imitators politely, and even published for one or two of them; but the high business aspirations which now glowed within him were all concentrated on the great original. He had conceived the sublime idea of becoming Balzac's sole publisher; of buying up all his copyrights held by other houses, and of issuing all his new works that were yet to be written. Balzac himself welcomed this proposal with superb indulgence. "Walter Scott," he said, in his grandest way, "had only one publisher—Archibald Constable. Work out your idea. I authorise it; I support it. I will be Scott, and you shall be Constable!"

Fired by the prodigious future thus disclosed to him, Monsieur Werdet assumed forthwith the character of a French Constable; and opened negotiations with no less than six publishers who held among them the much-desired copyrights. His own enthusiasm did something for him; his excellent previous character in the trade, and his remarkable success at starting, did much more. The houses he dealt with took his bills in all directions, without troubling him for security. After innumerable interviews and immense exercise of diplomacy, he raised himself at last to the pinnacle of his ambition—he became sole proprietor and publisher of the works of Balzac.

The next question—a sordid, but, unhappily, a necessary question also—was how to turn this precious acquisition to the best pecuniary account. Some of the works, such as *La Physio-*

logie du Mariage, and La Peau de Chagrin, had produced, and were still producing, large sums. Others, on the contrary, such as the Contes Philosophiques (which were a little too profound for the public) and Louis Lambert (which was intended to popularise the mysticism of Swedenborg), had not yet succeeded in paying their expenses. Estimating his speculation by what he had in hand, Monsieur Werdet had not much chance of seeing his way speedily to quick returns. Estimating it, however, by what was coming in the future, that is to say, by the promised privilege of issuing all the writer's contemplated works, he had every reason to look happily and hopefully at his commercial prospects. At this crisis of the narrative, when the publisher's credit and fortune depended wholly on the pen of one man, the history of that man's habits of literary composition assumes a special interest and importance. Monsieur Werdet's description of Balzac at his writing-desk presents by no means the least extraordinary of the many singular revelations which compose the story of the author's life.

When he had once made up his mind to produce a new book, Balzac's first proceeding was to think it out thoroughly before he put pen to paper. He was not satisfied with possessing himself of the main idea only; he followed it mentally into its minutest ramifications, devoting to the process just that amount of patient hard labour and self-sacrifice which no inferior writer ever has the common sense or the courage to bestow on his work. With his note-book ready in his hand, Balzac studied his scenes and characters straight from life. General knowledge of what he wanted to describe was not enough for this determined realist. If he found himself in the least at fault, he would not hesitate to take a long journey merely to ensure truth to nature in describing the street of a country town, or in painting some minor peculiarity of rustic character. In Paris he was perpetually about the streets, perpetually penetrating into all classes of society, to study the human nature about him in its minutest varieties. Day by day, and week by week, his note-book and his brains were hard at work together, before he thought of sitting down to his desk to begin. When he had finally amassed his materials in this laborious manner, he at last retired to his study; and from that time, till his book had gone to press, society saw him no more.

His house-door was now closed to everybody, except the publisher and the printer; and his costume was changed to a loose white robe, of the sort which is worn by the Dominican monks. This singular writing-dress was fastened round the waist by a chain of Venetian gold, to which hung little pliers and scissors of the same precious metal. White Turkish trousers, and red-morocco slippers, embroidered with gold, covered his legs and feet. On the day when he sat down to his desk, the light of heaven was shut out, and he worked by the light of candles in superb silver sconces. Even letters were not allowed to reach him. They were all thrown, as they

came, into a japan vase, and not opened, no matter how important they might be, till his work was all over. He rose to begin writing at two in the morning, continued, with extraordinary rapidity, till six; then took his bath, and stopped in it, thinking, for an hour or more. At eight o'clock his servant brought him up a cup of coffee. Before nine his publisher was admitted to carry away what he had done. From nine till noon he wrote on again, always at the top of his speed. At noon he breakfasted on eggs, with a glass of water and a second cup of coffee. From one o'clock to six he returned to work. At six he dined lightly, only allowing himself one glass of wine. From seven to eight he received his publisher again; and at eight o'clock he went to bed. This life he led, while he was writing his books, for two months together, without intermission. Its effect on his health was such that, when he appeared once more among his friends, he looked, in the popular phrase, like his own ghost. Chance acquaintances would hardly have known him again.

It must not be supposed that this life of resolute seclusion and fierce hard toil ended with the completion of the first draught of his manuscript. At the point where, in the instances of most men, the serious part of the work would have come to an end, it had only begun for Balzac. In spite of all the preliminary studying and thinking, when his pen had scrambled its way straight through to the end of the book, the leaves were all turned back again, and the first manuscript was altered into a second with inconceivable patience and care. Innumerable corrections and interlinings, to begin with, led in the end to transpositions and expansions which metamorphosed the entire work. Happy thoughts were picked out of the beginning of the manuscript, and inserted where they might have a better effect at the end. Others at the end would be moved to the beginning, or the middle. In one place, chapters would be expanded to three or four times their original length; in another, abridged to a few paragraphs; in a third, taken out altogether, or shifted to new positions. With all this mass of alterations in every page, the manuscript was at last ready for the printer. Even to the sharp experienced eyes in the printing-office, it was now all but illegible. The deciphering it, and setting it up in a moderately correct form, cost an amount of patience and pains which wearied out all the best men in the office, one after another, before the first series of proofs could be submitted to the author's eye. When these were at last complete, they were sent in on large slips, and the indefatigable Balzac immediately set to work to rewrite the whole book for the third time!

He now covered with fresh corrections, fresh alterations, fresh expansions of this passage, and fresh abridgments of that, not only the margins of the proofs all round, but even the little intervals of white space between the paragraphs. Lines crossing each other in inde-

scribable confusion were supposed to show the bewildered printer the various places at which the multitude of new insertions were to be slipped in. Illegible as Balzac's original manuscripts were, his corrected proofs were more hopelessly puzzling still. The picked men in the office, to whom alone they could be entrusted, shuddered at the very name of Balzac, and relieved each other at intervals of an hour, beyond which time no one printer could be got to continue at work on the universally execrated and universally unintelligible proofs. The "revises"—that is to say, the proofs embodying the new alterations—were next pulled to pieces in their turn. Two, three, and sometimes four, separate sets of them were required before the author's leave could be got to send the perpetually rewritten book to press at last, and so have done with it. He was literally the terror of all printers and editors; and he himself described his process of work as a misfortune, to be the more deplored, because it was, in his case, an intellectual necessity. "I toil sixteen hours out of the twenty-four," he said, "over the elaboration of my unhappy style; and I am never satisfied, myself, when all is done."

Looking back to the school-days of Balzac, when his mind suffered under the sudden and mysterious shock which has been described in its place; remembering that his father's character was notorious for its eccentricity; observing the prodigious toil, the torture almost, of mind which the act of literary production seems to have cost him all through life, it is impossible not to arrive at the conclusion, that, in his case, there must have been a fatal incompleteness somewhere in the mysterious intellectual machine. Magnificently as it was endowed, the balance of faculties in his mind seems to have been even more than ordinarily imperfect. On this theory, his unparalleled difficulties in expressing himself, as a writer, and his errors, inconsistencies, and meannesses of character, as a man, become, at least, not wholly unintelligible. On any other theory, all explanation both of his personal life and his literary life appears to be simply impossible.

Such was the perilous pen on which Monsieur Werdet's prospects in life all depended. If Balzac failed to perform his engagements punctually, or if his health broke down under his severe literary exertions, the commercial decease of his unfortunate publisher followed either disaster, purely as a matter of course.

At the outset, however, the posture of affairs looked encouragingly enough. On its completion in the *Revue de Paris*, *Le Lys dans la Vallée* was republished by Monsieur Werdet, who had secured his interest in the work by a timely advance of six thousand francs. Of this novel (the most highly valued in France of all the writer's fictions), but two hundred copies of the first edition were left undisposed of within two hours after its publication. This unparalleled success kept Monsieur Werdet's head above water, and encouraged him to hope great things from the next novel (*Séraphita*), which was also begun, periodically, in the *Revue de Paris*.

Before it was finished, however, Balzac and his editor quarrelled, and the long-suffering publisher was obliged to step in and pay the author's forfeit-money, obtaining the incomplete novel in return, and with it Balzac's promise to finish the work off-hand. Months passed, however, and not a page of manuscript was produced. One morning, at eight o'clock, to Monsieur Werdet's horror and astonishment, Balzac burst in on him in a condition of sublime despair, to announce that he and his genius had to all appearance parted company for ever.

"My brain is empty!" cried the great man. "My imagination is dried up! Hundreds of cups of coffee and two baths a day have done nothing for me. Werdet, I am a lost man!"

The publisher thought of his empty cash-box, and was petrified. The author proceeded:

"I must travel!" he exclaimed, wildly. "My genius has run away from me—I must pursue it over mountains and valleys—Werdet! I must catch my genius up!"

Poor Monsieur Werdet faintly suggested a little turn in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris—something equivalent to a nice airy ride to Hampstead on the top of an omnibus. But Balzac's runaway genius had, in the estimation of its bereaved proprietor, got as far as Vienna already; and he coolly announced his intention of travelling after it to the Austrian capital.

"And who is to finish *Séraphita*?" inquired the unhappy publisher. "My illustrious friend, you are ruining me!"

"On the contrary," remarked Balzac, persuasively, "I am making your fortune. At Vienna, I shall find my genius—at Vienna I shall finish *Séraphita*, and a new book besides—at Vienna, I shall meet with an angelic woman who admires me—I call her 'Carissima'—she has written to invite me to Vienna—I ought, I must, I will, accept the invitation."

Here an ordinary acquaintance would have had an excellent opportunity of saying something smart. But poor Monsieur Werdet was not in a position to be witty; and, moreover, he knew but too well what was coming next. All he ventured to say was:

"But I am afraid you have no money."

"You can raise some," replied his illustrious friend. "Borrow—deposit stock in trade—get me two thousand francs. Everything else I can do for myself. Werdet! I will hire a post-chaise—I will dine with my dear sister—I will set off after dinner—I will not be later than eight o'clock—click-clack!" And the great man executed an admirable imitation of the cracking of a postilion's whip.

There was no resource for Monsieur Werdet but to throw the good money after the bad. He raised the two thousand francs; and away went Balzac to catch his runaway genius, to bask in the society of a female angel, and to coin money in the form of manuscripts.

Eighteen days afterwards a perfumed letter from the author reached the publisher. He had caught his genius at Vienna; he had been magnificently received by the aristocracy; he had

finished *Séraphita*, and nearly completed the other book; his angelic friend, Carissima, already loved Werdet from Balzac's description of him; Balzac himself was Werdet's friend till death; Werdet was his Archibald Constable; Werdet should see him again in fifteen days; Werdet should ride in his carriage in the Bois de Boulogne, and meet Balzac riding in his carriage, and see the enemies of both parties looking on at the magnificent spectacle and bursting with spite. Finally, Werdet would have the goodness to remark (in a postscript) that Balzac had provided himself with another little advance of fifteen hundred francs, received from Rothschild in Vienna, and had given in exchange a bill at ten days' sight on his excellent publisher, on his admirable and devoted Archibald Constable.

While Monsieur Werdet was still prostrate under the effect of this audacious postscript, a clerk entered his office with the identical bill. It was drawn at one day's sight instead of ten; and the money was wanted immediately. The publisher was the most long-suffering of men; but there were limits even to his patient endurance. He took Balzac's letter with him, and went at once to the office of the Parisian Rothschild. The great financier received him kindly; admitted that there must have been some mistake; granted the ten days' grace; and dismissed his visitor with this excellent and sententious piece of advice:

"I recommend you to mind what you are about, sir, with Monsieur de Balzac. He is a highly inconsequent man."

It was too late for Monsieur Werdet to mind what he was about. He had no choice but to lose his credit, or pay at the end of the ten days. He paid; and ten days later, Balzac returned, considerably bringing with him some charming little Viennese curiosities for his esteemed publisher. Monsieur Werdet expressed his acknowledgments; and then politely inquired for the conclusion of "*Séraphita*," and the manuscript of the new novel.

Not a single line of either had been committed to paper.

The farce (undoubtedly a most disgraceful performance, so far as Balzac was concerned) was not played out even yet. The publisher's reproaches seem at last to have awakened the author to something remotely resembling a sense of shame. He promised that "*Séraphita*," which had been waiting at press a whole year, should be finished in one night. There were just two sheets of sixteen pages each to write. They might have been completed either at the author's house or at the publisher's, which was close to the printer's. But, no—it was not in Balzac's character to miss the smallest chance of producing a sensation anywhere. His last caprice was a determination to astonish the printers. Twenty-five compositors were called together at eleven at night, a truckle-bed and table were set up for the author—or, to speak more correctly, for the literary mountebank—in the workshop; Balzac arrived, in a high state of inspiration, to stagger the sleepy journeymen by

showing them how fast he could write; and the two sheets were completed magnificently on the spot. By way of fit and proper climax to this ridiculous exhibition of literary quackery, it is only necessary to add, that, on Balzac's own confession, the two concluding sheets of "*Séraphita*" had been mentally composed, and carefully committed to memory, two years before he affected to write them impromptu in the printer's office. It seems impossible to deny that the man who could act in this outrageously puerile manner must have been simply mad; but what becomes of the imputation when we remember that this very madman produced books which, for depth of thought and marvellous knowledge of human nature, are counted deservedly among the glories of French literature, and which were never more living and more lasting works than they are at this moment?

"*Séraphita*" was published three days after the author's absurd exhibition of himself at the printer's office. In this novel, as in its predecessor, Louis Lambert, Balzac left his own firm ground of reality, and soared, on the wings of Swedenborg, into an atmosphere of transcendental obscurity impervious to all ordinary eyes. What the book meant, the editor of the periodical in which part of it originally appeared never could explain. Monsieur Werdet, who published it, confessed that he was in the same mystified condition; and the present writer, who has vainly attempted to read it through, desires to add, in this place, his own modest acknowledgment of inability to enlighten English readers in the smallest degree on the subject of "*Séraphita*." Luckily for Monsieur Werdet, the author's reputation stood so high with the public, that the book sold prodigiously, merely because it was a book by Balzac. The proceeds of the sale, and the profits derived from new editions of the old novels, kept the sinking publisher from absolute submersion; and might even have brought him safely to land, but for the ever-increasing dead weight of the author's perpetual borrowings, on the security of forthcoming works which he never produced.

No commercial success, no generous self-sacrifice, could keep pace with the demands of Balzac's insatiate vanity and love of show, at this period of his life. He had two establishments, to begin with; both splendidly furnished, and one adorned with a valuable gallery of pictures. He had his box at the French Opera, and his box at the Italian Opera. He had a chariot and horses, and an establishment of men servants. The panels of the carriage were decorated with the arms, and the bodies of the footmen were adorned with the liveries, of the noble family of D'Entragues, to which Balzac persisted in declaring that he was allied, although he never could produce the smallest proof in support of the statement. When he could add no more to the sumptuous magnificence of his houses, his dinners, his carriage, and his servants; when he had filled his rooms with every species of expensive knick-knack; when he had lavished money on all the known extravagances which extravagant Paris can supply to the spend-

thrift's inventory, he hit on the entirely new idea of providing himself with such a walking-stick as the world had never yet beheld. A splendid cane was first procured, was sent to the jeweller's, and was grandly topped by a huge gold knob. The inside of the knob was occupied by a lock of hair presented to the author by an unknown lady admirer. The outside was studded with all the jewels he had bought, and with all the jewels he had received as presents. With this cane, nearly as big as a drum-major's staff, and all a-blaze at the top with rubies, diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires, Balzac exhibited himself, in a rapture of satisfied vanity, at the theatres and in the public promenades. The cane became as celebrated in Paris as the author. Madame de Girardin wrote a sparkling little book all about the wonderful walking-stick. Balzac was in the seventh heaven of happiness; Balzac's friends were either disgusted or diverted, according to their tempers. One unfortunate man alone suffered the inevitable penalty of this insane extravagance: need it be added that his name was Werdet?

The end of the connexion between the author and the publisher was now fast approaching. All entreaties or reproaches addressed to Balzac failed in producing the slightest result. Even confinement in a sponging-house, when creditors discovered, in course of time, that they could wait no longer, passed unheeded as a warning. Balzac only borrowed more money the moment the key was turned on him, gave a magnificent dinner in prison, and left the poor publisher, as usual, to pay the bill. He was extricated from the sponging-house before he had been there quite three days; and, at that time, he had spent over twenty guineas on luxuries which he had not a farthing of his own to purchase. It is useless, it is even exasperating, to go on accumulating instances of this sort of mad and cruel prodigality: let us advance rapidly to the end. One morning, Monsieur Werdet balanced accounts with his author, from the beginning, and found, in spite of the large profits produced by the majority of the works, that fifty-eight thousand francs were (to use his own expression) paralysed in his hands by the life Balzac persisted in leading; and that fifty-eight thousand more might soon be in the same condition, if he had possessed them to advance. A rich publisher might have contrived to keep his footing in such a crisis as this, and to deal, for the time to come, on purely commercial grounds. But Monsieur Werdet was a poor man; he had relied on Balzac's verbal promises when he ought to have exacted his written engagements; and he had no means of appealing to the author's love of money by dazzling prospects of bank-notes awaiting him in the future, if he chose honestly to earn his right to them—in short, there was but one alternative left, the alternative of giving up the whole purpose and ambition of the bookseller's life, and resolutely breaking off his ruinous connexion with Balzac.

Reduced to this situation, driven to bay by the prospect of engagements falling due which

he had no apparent means of meeting, Monsieur Werdet answered the next application for an advance by a flat refusal, and followed up that unexampled act of self-defence by speaking his mind at last, in no measured terms, to his illustrious friend. Balzac turned crimson with suppressed anger, and left the room. A series of business formalities followed, initiated by Balzac, with the view of breaking off the connexion between his publisher and himself, now that he found there was no more money to be had. Monsieur Werdet, on his side, was perfectly ready to "sign, seal, and deliver," and was most properly resolute in pressing his claims in due form of law. Balzac had but one means of meeting his liabilities. His personal reputation was gone; but his literary reputation remained as high as ever; and he soon found a publisher, with large capital at command, who was ready to treat for his copyrights. Monsieur Werdet had no resource but to sell, or be bankrupt. He parted with all the valuable copyrights for a sum of sixty thousand and odd francs, which sufficed to meet his most pressing engagements. Some of the less popular and less valuable books he kept, to help him, if possible, through his daily and personal liabilities. As for gaining any absolute profit, or even holding his position as a publisher, the bare idea of securing either advantage was dismissed as an idle dream. The purpose for which he had toiled so hard and suffered so patiently was sacrificed for ever, and he was reduced to beginning life again as a country traveller for a prosperous publishing house. So far as his main object in existence was concerned, Balzac had plainly and literally ruined him. It is impossible to part with Monsieur Werdet, imprudent and credulous as he appears to have been, without a strong feeling of sympathy, which becomes strengthened to something like positive admiration when we discover that he cherished, in after life, no unfriendly sentiments towards the man who had treated him so shamefully; and when we find him, in the *Memoir* now under notice, still trying hard to make the best of Balzac's conduct, and still writing of him in terms of affection and esteem to the very end of the book.

The remainder of Balzac's life was, in substance, merely the lamentable repetition of the personal faults and follies, and the literary merits and triumphs, which have already found their record in these pages. The extremes of idle vanity and unprincipled extravagance still alternated, to the last, with the extremes of hard mental labour and amazing mental productiveness. Though he found new victims among new men, he never again met with so generous and forbearing a friend as the poor publisher whose fortunes he had destroyed. The women, whose strange impulses in his favour were kept alive by their admiration of his books, clung to their spoilt darling to the last—one of their number even stepping forward to save him from a debtors' prison, at the heavy sacrifice of paying the whole demand against him out of her own purse. In all cases of this sort, even where

men were concerned as well as women, his personal means of attraction, when he chose to exert them, strengthened immensely his literary claims on the sympathy and good-will of others. He appears to have possessed in the highest degree those powers of fascination which are quite independent of mere beauty of face and form, and which are perversely and inexplicably bestowed in the most lavish abundance on the most unprincipled of mankind. Poor Monsieur Werdet can only account for half his own acts of indiscretion by declaring that his eminent friend wheedled him into committing them. Other and wiser men kept out of Balzac's way, through sheer distrust of themselves. Virtuous friends, who tried hard to reform him, retreated from his presence, declaring that the reprobate whom they had gone to convert had all but upset their moral balance in a morning's conversation. An eminent literary gentleman, who went to spend the day with him to talk over a proposed work, rushed out of the house after a two hours' interview, exclaiming piteously, "The man's imagination is in a state of delirium—his talk has set my brain in a whirl—he would have driven me mad if I had spent the day with him!" If men were influenced in this way, it is not wonderful that women (whose self-esteem was delicately flattered by the prominent and fascinating position which they hold in all his books) should have worshipped a man who publicly and privately worshipped them.

His personal appearance would have recalled to English minds the popular idea of Friar Tuck—he was the very model of the conventional fat, sturdy, red-faced, jolly monk. But he had the eye of a man of genius, and the tongue of a certain infernal personage, who may be broadly hinted at, but who must on no account be plainly named. The Balzac candlestick might be clumsy enough; but when once the Balzac candle was lit, the moths flew into it, only too readily, from all points of the compass.

The last important act of his life was, in a worldly point of view, one of the wisest things he ever did. The lady who had invited him to Vienna, and whom he called Carissima, was the wife of a wealthy Russian nobleman. On the death of her husband, she practically asserted her admiration of her favourite author by offering him her hand and fortune. Balzac accepted both; and returned to Paris (from which respect for his creditors had latterly kept him absent) a married man, and an enviable member of the wealthy class of society. A splendid future now opened before him—but it opened too late. Arrived at the end of his old course, he just saw the new career beyond him, and dropped on the threshold of it. The strong constitution which he had remorselessly wasted for more than twenty years past, gave way at length, at the very time when his social chances looked most brightly. Three months after his marriage, Honoré de Balzac died, after unspeakable suffering, of disease of the heart. He was then but fifty years of age. His fond, proud, heart-broken old mother held him in her arms. On that loving bosom he had

drawn his first breath—on that loving bosom the weary head sank to rest again, when the wild, wayward, miserable, glorious life was over.

The sensation produced in Paris by his death was something akin to the sensation produced in London by the death of Byron. Mr. Carlyle has admirably said that there is something touching in the loyalty of men to their Sovereign-Man! That loyalty most tenderly declared itself when Balzac was no more. Men of all ranks and parties, who had been shocked by his want of principle and disgusted by his inordinate vanity while he was alive, now accepted universally the atonement of his untimely death, and remembered nothing but the loss that had happened to the literature of France. A great writer was no more; and a great people rose with one accord to take him reverently and gloriously to his grave. The French Institute, the University, the scientific societies, the Association of Dramatic Authors, the Schools of Law and Medicine, sent their representatives to walk in the funeral procession. English readers, American readers, German readers, and Russian readers, swelled the immense assembly of Frenchmen that followed the coffin. Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas were among the mourners who supported the pall. The first of these two celebrated men pronounced the funeral oration over Balzac's grave, and eloquently characterised the whole series of the dead writer's works as forming, in truth, but one grand book, the text-book of contemporary civilisation. With that just and generous tribute to the genius of Balzac, offered by the most illustrious of his literary rivals, these few pages may fitly and gracefully come to an end. Of the miserable frailties of the man, enough has been recorded to serve the first of all interests, the interest of truth. The better and nobler part of him calls for no further comment at any writer's hands. It remains to us in his works, and it speaks with deathless eloquence for itself.

A CAR-FULL OF FAIRIES.

I WAS, knapsack on my back, with occasional lifts on jaunting-cars, making a tour of Ireland, hearing shillelaghs rattle, seeing whisky drunk, and listening to rebellious songs all about pikes and the *Shan vanocht*, or the old prophesies who, in '98, predicted the arrival of the French.

I was a tourist on my way through Connemara, determined to hear as much of the brogue, see as much of the big blue mountains called "the Twelve Pins," and pick up as many stories of banshees and Ribbonmen as I could in a few weeks. I had come from Killarney, where the spectre king, O'Donohue, mailed in sunshine, rides over the lake every May morning, and I was going to Donegal, the country of rock dwarfs, smugglers, and mine spirits. I knew if there was a fairy to be found in Ireland I should hear of it from Dennis O'Flanagan, who was to drive me in the jaunting-car between Ballyrobin and Ballynabrig, and so it proved.

The day had turned out wet, the rain fell in long slanting cords, and beginning first by covering the window-panes of the inn at Ballyrobin (where I was detained) with silver scratches like so many feeble attempts at autographs by some traveller possessed of a diamond ring, had at last come to a wide, washing stream that flooded the glass, and kept it dripping, like a thatched roof on a wet day, the bright drops matching each other in races to the bottom, as if they had determined to be merry, and to get up small Derbys on their own account. The car waited till the cushions got wet, and Dennis drove it back again under cover.

In my room there was not much to amuse a weather-bound traveller. The only books on the shelf over the illuminated tea-tray were a Catholic Testament in the Irish language, a dismembered volume of Tom Moore's Irish Melodies, and a History of the Irish Rebellion, black-greasy with thumbing. The mantelpiece was stuck with bagsmen's cards. There was nothing in the room peculiarly national except the peat fire and the peat basket, which, in Ireland, stands where the coal-scuttle does in England. There were the lumps of dried black turf, looking like small oblong cakes of chocolate, burning, or to be burnt. There is no blaze about a peat fire, but a quick, earnest, white flame, that slowly burns the sods (where once the snipe and wild duck fed and nestled; where the moping, bankrupt heron brooded over his irremediable misfortune; where the hooded crow watched the lamb, and the endless magpies strutted and fluttered) to a blinding pure crimson, so pure and intense, that it gradually alchemises into a bloom of colourless radiance, and then, lowering and sinking, lapses into white stillness preparatory to fusing into the mortuary ashes of old age and repentance. There is something primitive and savage in the tall basketful of dry turf, and I like to throw it on the fire, fancying myself Caractacus, or Phelim O'Toole, the first King of Munster.

The Three Salmon at Ballyrobin is not an hotel like the Hotel du Louvre at Paris. It more resembles an English village inn, with a dash of the English beer-shop. On the mantelpiece was the gresset (cresset), or rush wick in a pool of grease, that flared for me last night while I chilled my blood with stories of the Irish pikemen, and warmed it with sips of whisky-toddy. Then there is the rude deal table, which appears to serve the landlady's family for a sort of register or family Bible; for it is carved with hieroglyphic notches of past scores and initials of great men of the Joyce (landlady's family name) lineage now dead. O'Flanagan, when he came in to tell me that he thought there was a bit of blue showing over Benabola, and that the weather would hold up yet, was great in his commentaries on these initials. He said what I took for J for Joyce, was no J, bedad, at all, not a hap'orth of a J, but F for Flanagan, flaming O'Flanagan, his great-great-grandfather, who held

the inn before the Joyces was born or thought of. He was of the O'Flanagans—the flaming, combustible, mad, burning-hot O'Flanagans—the old Irish chiefs that the monks used to mention in their litanies, and pray specially against, chanting, as the candles twinkled, the incense smoked, and the bell tinkled, "From the wrath of the O'Flanagans—the flaming O'Flanagans—good Lord deliver us!" Well, but about the initials: there was M. F., that was Murphy O'Flanagan (rest his soul!), that bet the big grazier at Ballinasloe, and was killed at last by a foul blow on the back of the head of him from a thundering stone in an old woman's stocking. There was D. F.—that was Dennis O'Flanagan, who, at Donnybrook, wopped Slippery Sam, the English drover, and was transported for so getting the better of him. P. F.—that was Paddy O'Flanagan (Dennis's father, rest his soul!), who ended his life on the drop at Derry, for cutting the ears off of a "dirty blackguard" of a Dublin land agent.

While Dennis, really trusting it will hold up, goes to get out the car, I turn over all my Irish stories, whether of banshees or ribbonmen, of leprechan, crock of gold, changeling, demon horse, croppy, fairy, or what not. I bethink me of how a Doolan tamed the demon horse, and of how the famous O'Rourke went up to the moon, and was left there by the "big thafe" of an eagle. Tired at last of my rumination, and finding no one coming, I rouse myself and go out into the kitchen to see what delays Dennis and the car. I find Dennis, totally forgetful of me and the journey, intent on teasing Mistress Joyce's eldest daughter, a little wicked, black-eyed colleen, who has her back to me, and is arranging her long hair, which looks something like a horse's mane, by means of a cracked three-cornered bit of looking-glass stuck on the second row of plates on the dresser, and singing like a mermaid as she weaves her tresses:

"Sweet Molly Carew,
It wasn't for you
That I gave in the banns to the parson,
Yet, for you I'd do murder,
Yes, trayson, or further,
Staik, felo de say, or rale arson."

On one side of the crystal triangle sacred to female vanity, was a truculent, black-browed, burglarious portrait of Dean Cahill; on the other, a fubsy caricature of Napoleon, who is still the idol of the Irish peasantry, though he never did anything for them; these impulsive, inconsequential Celts always like best those who serve them least. Three brown, smoky lumps of ham contributed by the deceased "gentleman who pays the rint," depended from a beam over my head, like swords of Damocles. In one corner of the earth floor rolled a heap of "pink eyes," mixed in brotherly union with the "baskets-full," the genus potato the Joyces especially affect. On the shelf near Dennis is a suspicious green bottle half uncorked, and as he hears my foot, Dennis drops his whip, cries "In a moment, your honour!" and is off to the stables, while Kathleen looks round, colours, and brushes a stool clean with her apron for me to

sit down on, then kneels down and puffs at the smouldering peat fire, which she had nearly let out while Dennis had been whispering soft nonsense in her little pink ear. I observe on the mud floor, which is scooped out in hollows, and is anything but level or clean, the shavings of an alpeen (shillelagh) which Dennis has been long seasoning in the dunghill, and which he has just now been shaping into a terrific mace, intended to thin the ranks of the base anti-Flanagan faction; a rope of onions, in their smiling, bronzed, red-yellow skins, dangle overhead, and a salmon rod, with its spear at the butt-end, rests in a corner of the room. Kathleen, her mermaid dressing over, is now sitting down at the back door, on a chair without any particular seat, with one eye on Dennis, who is putting-to-the car, and flapping the blue cushions, and with the other on a she-goat, that feeds, tethered, near the stable, and is waiting for Mrs. Joyce to milk her. At Kathleen's feet, rolls, not over-dressed, young Teddy Joyce, playing with his mother's beads (the rosy darlint!), the very beads she counted as she went last week on her pilgrimage up that holy mountain near Westport, Croagh Patrick, which is as conical and nearly as steep as an extinguisher.

Dennis gives a howl of delight—one of those howls that you may still hear even in a Dublin concert-room—as the last buckle of the harness is slipped into place. He reappears in a large blue great-coat that reaches down to his heels, and with a rusty hat with a flapping lid that goes up and down, twined round with white shiny lines of gut, and studded, not with brooches, but with gaudy "maccaws" and "golden pheasants," as the best salmon-flies are called. Amongst these, like a gun from an embrasure, obtrudes the old Irish Adam, in the shape of a black dhudeen pipe, oily and odorous.

A truly Irish hubbub announces our departure. Mike Joyce emerges from some cellar, or secret distillery, red and rejoicing; men come out and shake hands with Dennis; Mrs. Joyce, with her white frilled cap and pleasant staring face insists on mixing me a "stirrup cup," in the shape of a glass of whisky-toddy; the sight of the sugar distilling down in a silvery shower in which, gives me quite a new impression of the charms of chemistry.

I shake hands with everybody, as if I was one of the Allied Powers in a popular print. I balance myself sideways on the shelf of the jaunting-car, feeling as an Englishman at first always does in that wild, erratic vehicle, as if I was on a side-saddle, or rather on a chair which was being drawn from under me.

I felt slightly qualmish, and clutched at the back rail as we started with a spurt and jerk that nearly unseated me.

"Hurrah!" called out the Joyce family. "More power to ye!" said Mrs. J. "Good luck to the worst of ye!" said Kathleen, looking up with a smile at Dennis for her stocking.

Off we were—that is to say, off I nearly was—

but I managed to keep my seat, which is more than some M.P.s can say, and away we went in that headlong, reckless, generous, pelting way that Irish carmen, reckless of wear and tear, always do go in the south of Ireland. Bally-robin faded behind us. Now, you who have laughed at the incomparable traveller who told you of coals being brought up on a china plate, guess what luggage we had in our car. Rats in a bottle? An elephant in a jam-pot? But you would never guess. A turkey in a hand-box—yes, positively, a turkey sent in an old bonnet-box to Ballynabrog market by Mrs. Joyce the prudent. I have seen a few droll things, but never anything odder than that. A swan in a basket at Basingstoke, with his neck out and a parchment direction round it, is droll; but the turkey in Mrs. Joyce's bonnet-box was irresistible.

Dennis is a Connaught man, pale and whiskerless, but with straight black hair and good features, with a serious, earnest manner, changing rapidly to rollicking fun and drolery, and with a fine swelling low-toned voice, capable of much rise and fall, much in and out, and endless subtle gradations of feeling.

It is rather startling to a sober, cynical, sceptical Englishman, who believes what he sees and can handle, and little else, to hear, for the first time, an Irishman telling a fairy story with a quiet, almost sad, air of intense conviction and feeling; it is startling to one accustomed to see sham ghosts brought up at police-courts and sentenced to the treadmill, and accustomed to hear aerial voices and winking statues accounted for by spectacled men on scientific principle, to find a man soberly and calmly relating, with a voice thrilling with emotion, some narrative of a dumbly prophesying banshee, or a child stolen by the fairies. At once a great mist rolls away, and you see the centuries that roll between the Protestant and Catholic, the Saxon and the Celt. You feel that you are in a twilight country, where faith is still unreasoning and supreme; where miracles, and relics, and ghosts, are still believed in; where ghost stories are matters of life and death to men; and where the beautiful monsters of our nurseries still walk, even in the daylight. Dennis has heard the banshee in the blue cloak, with the grey dishevelled hair, wailing under the peat heap; he has seen the phooka, or demon horse, tear past at night, with fiery mane and phosphorescent eyes; he has seen the fairies in green, garlanding the mushroom; he has beheld O'Donohue on his white horse rise from the tranquil morning lake; he has stolen up and heard the cluricaun, or little dwarf in the cocked-hat and scarlet Hogarth coat, tapping at a shoe on the sunny side of a haystack; and here am I, who love everything Irish, quite an outer barbarian who has never been granted any of these privileges! The banshee I saw near Cork, turned out to be old Mary Burke, drunk under a hedge, crooning a croppy song to herself; my phooka near Ballycastle was a tinker's Kerry pony; my leprechaun an itinerant cobbler, mem-

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ing a shoe under a bramble hedge outside Blarney Castle.

I was interrupted in these mythological reveries, and was prevented from coming to my final conclusion that more of the old Paganism remained in Ireland than in any other European country, by a tremendous split and crack of some part of the car.

"Be asy," said Dennis. "You get on the 'crow's-nest'" (the little nook for the driver in front of the car and between the two seats, where no Irish driver, if he can help it, ever sits). "I'll stand up by you, and it'll be all right. The car's not so young as it was, but it's——"

Here we gave a tremendous bump against a roadside post.

"Bedad! not many a car 'ud stand *that*, and be the better for it!"

Just then the rain began again—such rain! grape-shot and razor-blades—as we tore on—"slipping through it" Dennis called it—between walls of mountains capped with cloud. For more than an hour, head down, we butted through this, our shining yellow waterproofs glistening like gold.

At last it cleared up, out came the laughing blue. The bedrenched horse struck out sprightlier than ever. Dennis began to sing, and then to talk, and our talk fell on a certain mountain we were passing, called The Giant Mountain.

Now, Dennis was great in giants, being one of an old family who had numbered many giants in its ancestral roll.

"Did you ever hear of the giant who could hear the grass growing?" said I.

"No," said Dennis, "he couldn't have been a native of these parts. (Well, that's a good one, too.) But I have seen a giant's grave there away in Ennis, your honour. They say that he had the biggest bones of any man in those parts, but that his wife, falling in love with an ould haythen King of Clare, with the big gold crown on him, so that he looked like a walking jeweller's shop, *snigged* off his head with his own sword, for no other had any power over him. Many's the time I've sat making salmon-flies on that giant's gravestone. It wasn't twenty years ago that a party of the Green Horse came by that way, and stopped there, at the very stone, to water their horses. 'What's this?' says the corporal to a countryman, who was digging praties forment it. 'It was the work of a big Irish giant in the ould times,' says the countryman, civilly. 'Well,' says the other, 'then it will be the work of a young Scotch giant, in these times, to remove it.' So he tries, and tugs, and tugs, and gives it a terrible howge, but he couldn't make anything of it. (Laughs.) Och! the giant was too much for them—it's there now."

"I suppose," said I, "the banshee is seen sometimes hereabouts."

"Deed they are, your honour," said Dennis, seriously; "we generally hear them in the evening, or at twilight-fall, and we know that it is no human voice keening, because it is so sweet and mournful, like a sorrowing angel in

purgatory (rest their souls!) for all the world, your honour. The noise is just as if it was some old woman was sitting down under the wall yonder, and beating her thighs at intervals with the flat of her two hands, then flinging them up over her head and clapping them together, as the country keeners do when you hire them at a funeral to chant out the Ologaun."

"She dresses, I have heard," I said, humouring his belief, "in an old blue cloak, with her long grey hair falling over her white staring face, which is generally wan and famished. At Dunluce Castle they showed me a round room at the base of a tower overlooking the sea. It was once the prison of the Earls of Antrim, and some foul deed must have been done there in the black old times. The earthen floor of this banshee's tower is always kept clean and free from dust, and people say it is swept daily by the banshee."

"To think of that, now, your honour!" said Dennis, with intense interest, feeling his faith confirmed. "Well, a banshee was heard the night my mother died, and it was in an old Danish fort at the end of our praty ground; when my poor mother, and she in her death-struggles, heard that terrible wail that she knew was not human, and she down in the fever, she says to my father, says she, 'Dennis, I must go,' and sure enough she died that day week, at the very hour—and the same thing had happened to all her family, for she was of a good ould stock, your honour. A year or two after, what did she do but appear to Teddy, one of my little brothers. He come in one summer evening, and told us that as he was playing about with the yellow flowers that grow in the bog-holes, making them into necklaces and belts and what not, he feels a sort of warning, looks up and sees mother sitting on the stile just as she used to do, but very sad and pale. He ran to her, but just as he got near her, she melted away and disappeared. Then he got frightened, which he wasn't before, and run screaming home and tould us; and I remember it more, by token it was St. Dennis's day, and he is my patron saint, rest his soul!"—crossing himself five times.

"Did you ever see a cluricaun, Dennis?" said I—"one of those littlewizen fellows in red-heeled shoes, scarlet coats, and laced cocked-hats, who is seen hammering at a tiny brogue inside the ruins of a chapel, and who, if you gripe him, tells you where the crock of gold is?"

"No, your honour," said Dennis; "but I met a fairy man once when I was a boy. It was up a mountain, where I went to cut a stick, for it was all shaking with hazel-nut bushes, and I didn't care then for the story of the old folks that it was slap full of fairies, and what not, being a devil-me-care gossoon. I got up the hill, scrambling through the stones and dry fern, frightening rabbits, and startling thrushes, treading the swate breath out of the dry purple thyme, thinking of my girlcen, as I always did when I saw anything specially bright, sweet, or in any wise purty; up I went and up, now

pushing through the thorn bushes, and now getting out of the green dark into the broad blue brightness and sunshine, till I got nearly to the top, and looking out clear over bog and river, thanked God for having made such a country as ould Ireland. Then, looking above, what do I see but, twenty yards off, as nate a stick as I ever saw in my life, and, by my sowl, I didn't forget to cut it, and just as I was stripping off the broad woolly leaves, singing, "Ould Ireland's native shamrock," I looks up and sees a common-looking, queer sort of ould man coming straight towards me along the path. 'What do you do, you spalpeen,' says he, angrily, 'cutting my trees?' And he spoke as if they all belonged to him. Well, though it give me a little tremble, I wasn't to be put down, and thinks I, I'll walk nearer to you, and see what sort of a man you are—for I was ready then with my hands, your honour, and I walked straight on—straight on. But when I got to the place, tare an' ouns, where he had stood, he was gone—gone. I looked everywhere, under the trees, behind the bushes, over the big stones, but no man. So, thinks I, it's a fairy, sure enough, and with that, as if I had been shot down, I ran like a fellow from a mad dog. Och! it was devil a time I run faster in my life but once. Sod, wall, stone heap, bramble-bush, water gap, nothing stopped me, till I got home, torn, wet, dirty, red-hot, and frightened."

"But did you keep the enchanter's stick?" said I.

"Och, faix did I," said Dennis, "for a year or two, and the old man never claimed it; still, I always felt rather quare with it in my hand, and thought it would get me a bating maybe at a fair, or bring me in some bad luck; so I never took it to a faction fight, but one night, getting drunk, I lost it at Westport."

"Didn't you tell me," said I, "your father died for grief at a bating he got at a faction fight?"

"True to you, your honour," said Dennis, eliciting his whip, "or may I niver spake again. He was the champion of Knockmagee, your honour, and kept all the Joyces and the rest of them at bay, till one day twelve men of them got round him and beat him down when he was tired. I saw his shillelagh the other day over the chimney of a cousin of mine; it was twice as big as any other shillelagh. Och! he was a powerful strong big man, your honour (rest his sowl!), but they put him in gaol for the fight, where he was hurt, and it broke the heart of him not to be able to pay them out. That was a dreadful day to see the women with the stones in the stockings, and as for the loaded sticks clattering, you could hear them two hundred yards off. Och! but I owe it those Joyces, though Mike is my master. He had an extraordinary way of holding his stick, your honour, in the middle, and letting the end cover his arm and elbow, that has never been aqualled since. He had seen some ghost sights, too, had my fayther."

"What! more banshees?" said I, anxiously.

"Oh no, your honour, but fairy pipers—fairy pipers, your honour. He was one day near the fort, as we called it, at Ballyrobin, which is now little better than a grass hill with a hollow in-

side to it, when he heard, as he was driving the cows home, some sounds he thought was some neighbours staling his hay, which was making at the time, and lying about in dry heaps, your honour; so he goes home quietly, and gets an old rusty bagonet, and what does he do but lies down to wait for them behind a large hay-cock outside the fort. Presently, what should he hear with his two ears but a blessed sort of music oozing out of the fort, just like a thousand birds singing together on a May morning. Och! your honour, it was nothing but the good people dancing and figuring inside the hill. Well, before my father could make out where it came from he fell in a sort of swoond, and when he awoke he was outside the fort, two fields away; it was quite dark, and as for the bagonet, where was it but stuck in some hay just behind him! Well, never a word did he breathe of it till his dying day, when I leant over to catch his last gasp. But I'm tiring ye, your honour."

"Not a bit, Dennis," said I. "It prevents me counting the milestones."

"Well, then, I'll be telling you how there was a young Scotchman who took the farm after we went, and who used to be always laughing at the hambug about the fairy piper. 'Pipe away,' says he, 'and be plagued to you! So long as I don't have to pay, its chape music is that same. Thin's the words, or very near, he made use of at the markets and patrons, till one evening he was coming through the snipe meadow, and what does he hear but a piping just as if it was underground, and underground was heaven, and these were the sows of baptised children making merry and dancing for joy. As it was, as soon as he got home, 'Ma lanna vicht,' says his mother, who was half Irish, 'saints in paradise, what's turned your blood, jewel?' Then they seized him, especially the girlsens his sisters, till he recovered a bit, and up and told them he had heard the Macarthy's fairy pipers."

"Those Protestants are very slow of belief, Dennis?" said I.

"Och, and you're right, your honour," said Dennis. "Penance, pilgrimage, cross, mass, it's all one with them. Faix! it puzzles me to say how the likes of 'em will ever find a back way to get into heaven without paying St. Peter's turnpike. But has your honour ever heard of how the fairies change the children in ould Ireland?"

"Of course I have, Dennis," said I. "Don't we all know how they pine and pine and get wizened, and knowing and say things any old man could say; and then the mother, after much praying, rushes at them suddenly in the cradle with a red-hot poker, which she has been getting ready for the hour past, and then, with a scream, the change comes, and she finds, instead of the little knowing dwarf, her own fine rosy child again, crying for the breast."

"Bedad! Your honour," said Dennis, "has got it all by heart, like a schoolmaster gets the Latin! Well, I heard a case of this kind the night of a birth only last Paschal. A friend of mine who drives a car was coming along the road, and see something white at the window of

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his brother's house yonder, so what does he do but get out and creep up closer did Patsy, and what should it be but an ould woman, wrapped up in grey, handing a child out of the lattice to another ould creatur in grey, who held up her arms for it down below. 'Have you got it?' says she. 'I have,' says the other. Well, he thought it was all a witchery, and that, perhaps, it was a little owing to the whisky he had drunk at the fair; but, sure enough, next day, he found his brother's child had died at the birth. So he knew what had become of it, that what they buried was a mere trick of flesh, and that the real child was snug and safe in fairyland—which was a comfort to him, though he kept it to himself. So never mention it, your honour, or it'll hurt the family."

"Why, Dennis," said I, "you are as full of old stories as an egg is full of meat."

"And fuller too, begging your honour's pardon," said Dennis. "I remember hearing a neighbour of ours at Kilmore tell me that the night of the great storm she and some other women were sitting round a fire in a cottage, listening to the pelt and drive of the rain, and the fluster and worry of the wind outside the cabin—crossing themselves, I'll be bail, and thinking of the forrior ganagh (bitter sadness) of those who had gone to Ameriky, and might be then on the broad say (rest their souls!). All of a sudden there came a bigger roar than ever, as if a wild baste and the devil on it was waiting hungry at the thrashal, and bang the door flew open! Some of them saw nothing more but some windle straws (larsar lena) blowing round the floor, but she I spoke to saw distinctly troops of fairies riding round on horses no bigger than small birds. Then the door slammed again, and they heard a clash of swords outside, and a hurry as if there was a scrimmage going on in the air, which passed down the road, and gradually died away in the distance. The next morning, sure enough—and the woman who told me saw it with her own eyes—there come news of the battle of Salamanky, and there was drops of blood for a quarter of a mile down the causeway; so no doubt but that was a fairy battle."

"Which clearly accounted, Dennis, for the big wind and the ships that went down," said I.

"Not a doubt else, and hear me now. The only way in such perplexities is to go to the fairy doctor, who knows all about the blast and the changes and the meal cure. Try a drop of Parlemint (legal whisky), your honour; it keeps the cold out of the stomach and the heat in it. Good luck to him who invented it (rest their souls!). Well, as your honour sames so fond of these old pishogues (God between you and harm!), I must tell you about the fairy cow that used to feed every third night inside the ruins of Castle Ballynock, till the naygur who kept it, who was a relation of ours (third cousin) on my mother's side, kilt it, and laid the skin to soak in his dunghill. From that time everything went wrong with him: the cattle died, his sheep had the rot, and he got into a lawsuit (rest his soul!). While he was puzzling his head to

know what brought all this mischief on him—whether it was missing mass, or not going to St. Bridget's Well, or up Croagh Patrick and doing the stations, as his decent father had done, or what—a fairy appears to him one night in a dream, and says she to him, 'Mr. Flanagan, that cow you killed was my grandfather, and that's my grandfather's skin, you spalpeen, you have got soaking in your dunghill. You black-gaird, if you have any manners, take and lay it in the fort to-night, and when the cow comes to life and runs round the enclosure, turn your back, you villain, and take care not to cross yourself, Mr. Flanagan.' This he did, and glad enough, and out come the cow; he heard a voice thanking him for returning the skin, and all went right with him ever afterwards."

After this, Dennis grew silent, and I fell musing. "The old superstitions of Ireland," thought I, "are dying out like the old language." still Munster has its cluricaun artisan, its Merrow and Duhallane, its O'Donohue and its Macgilllicuddy. The islanders of Shark and Baffin have their Terence O'Flaherty, as the Connaught man has his Daniel O'Rourke, who rode on the eagle all the way from the moon to Munster, and May-day bonfires still redden the sky in remembrance of Baal.

The Irish philosophy of fairies is that they are fallen angels, who, being neutral beings not altogether lost, are sent to suffer a further probation on earth before they are raised again to heaven or sealed up for ever to perdition. The Ulster men think the "wee folk" live wherever they at first fell. The Irish fairies are generally old, ugly, lame, and wizened, but have a power of assuming shapes, as a witch can change to a hare or a cat. They use these shapes only to reveal themselves to men in. They haunt old ruins where they dance and revel, and, if possible, injure or allure men. Sudden deaths are generally attributed to their agency, merely from such deaths being unaccountable, and so, *petitio principii*, supernatural. The Derry and Antrim mountaineers have their brownie, who with Scotch industry labours for his "cream bowl" duly set; in other words, the brownie is a sly servant, working overtime. Still if on a summer's day, when the sky is burning blue and hot, the Irish labourer, going to the bog for turf, sees a whirl of dust twisting playfully in the air, he ceases to sing and laugh, holds his breath, looks down, repeats a prayer, and crosses himself, for he knows that that whirl of dust contains a flock of the "good" people.

These days of simple faith are, however, going for ever, even in Ireland. Fairies disappear before the red-whiskered bagman, with his tin boxes and bundles of pattern cards; before the smart and tramp of the steam-engine; before fashionable tourists and fashionable guide books. O'Donohue no longer rises on his white horse from the lake on May-day morning. No longer the Antrim brownie, hairy and rude, sweats at his kindly task, more grateful than man; no longer fairies circle the mushroom, or minuet in and out between the rows of daisies.

The great granite mountains, seathed with thunder and furrowed by the lightning's stroke, no longer see the giant striding from peak to peak through the violet-coloured mist. No longer the banshee wails under the leafless thorn-bush; no longer the tap of the cluricaun's hammer is heard by the gold-seeker. The black bog pits have yielded almost their last gold chain and brooch of the old Danish king, slain long since, and buried amid gigantic elk bones blackened pine trunks, and stone axes, down far below the quaking surface, over which the snipe zigzags or the bittern booms. The tumbling waggon jolts by with its cargo of laughing revellers, where the crotchy piper was buried under the sign-post during the troubles; or by the heap of stones, once a happy home till the red night that the Shanavests, or Carders, or Hearts of Steel, hemmed round its burning roof. No bleeding nun or ghost of the blaspheming fox-hunter, who chased the vermin to the very altar, appears now to scare the English pedestrian; even the ghosts have emigrated out of Ireland since the Union. Catholic ghosts, abhorring Repeal, will not take the trouble to scare Protestant land agents sneaking about in disguise, for fear of the flint-piece and the sight behind the wall. The good old days of female hangmen, and processions of corpses in crimson carts are gone by; the ribbonmen no longer flaunt their ribbons at night upon the Curragh or in the bawn; the gully, where the foxes are, no longer has its black peat water stained with the blood of Molly Maguire's children; the tullagh's slope is untrod by the insolent hoof of the butcher yeoman's chargers; the tubber (spring) is left by the barefooted pilgrim to the snipe and the moor-hen; the sliebh is bluer than ever, because a brighter sun shines on its mountains of piled sapphire; the old stars shine cheerier over the scorched headland where the gull screams and the great droves of silver salmon still leap and swim; the Dane's rath grows greener, and the Druid's ghost lies on the grassy knoll by the sea, listening to the old ocean hymn.

Tide of Lough Erne, let thy floods rise and hide the ruins of dead men's graves, so that old wrongs be hidden away and forgotten; let the Croagh's peak point to a new heaven and a new earth, so that the crimes of the old blood-boltered Don and Donagh be forgotten! Round towers, where the squall-crow and starling only build, echo once more with the voice of the prophecy of a happier future! Shall we never see the day when the coast of Ireland shall be starry at dusk with the answering lustres of the warning light-houses; when her mountains shall be circled—not with black Phlegethons of bog, but with smiling fields and belts of cottages; when fleets of fishing-boats shall fill her bays, and her roads shall be crowded with merchandise? May the blessed day soon come when her cities shall

widen and her commerce increase; when her fisheries shall become as numerous as her manufactories, the north be white with bleaching-fields, and the south be yellow with flocks!

Dennis here became uneasy about a seat-cushion he had lost. "We are sure," he said, "to meet the masthur. He'll want to get up just because it's dropped somewhere on the road. Now, if I had had them all right I shouldn't have seen the sole of his foot."

"What shall you do? The agent will be stopping your wages," said I.

"If I don't find it to-morrow, I'll just stale another," said Dennis in a low, quiet, voice.

"Who is that thin man in front, Dennis?" said I.

"Oh, that's a schoolmaster," said Dennis, "I know, by his cut, but I won't see him, or he'll be wanting me to take him to Clifden, and pay me with a writing lesson. Sorra a one that we meet but I know, yet they don't know me, that's the best of it. Here's the two Mr. Bradys. The top of the morning to you, Mr. Brady! They're brothers; you wouldn't think, your honour, there was a drop of blood between them, no more than there is between you and me" (abruptly, with true Irish discursiveness). "Do you see their oiled coats? It's better than all your mackintosh; it's soaked three months in oil; it's better than all your mackintosh, with the soft soap and ingy-rubber."

We were now entering Ballynabrig, along whose suburb road was pouring a train of country people returning from the fair. Now, it was a primitive tumbling car, with its flimsy shelf and outrigger crowded with grey-stockinged farmers and laughing colleens; now, it was a cage-cart full of pigs, who looked out between the bars, with that calm, observing, friendly independence peculiar to the Irish pig; now, most amusing of all, it was a rough, conical-hatted, old, raw-boned schoolmaster riding a donkey, with his splay feet stuck in hay stirrups; now, we met rough graziers wrapped in frieze; countrymen of all ages in the constitutional tail-coat, gait buttons, and knee-breeches, and the slip of a stick stuck under the arm. Every eye was bright with good-humoured whisky, some sang, all greeted us with a shout, a flourish of sticks, and a joke.

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